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FRANCISCAN ESSAYS



PAUL SABATIER
AND OTHERS

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PREFATORY NOTE

On behalf of the British Society of Franciscan Studies I desire to thank the writers of these essays for their gifts.

Each writer is responsible for his own contribution and for it alone.

It is hoped to issue similar collections of essays from time to time. These volumes will form an "extra series" in the sense that they are outside the editions of texts which form the principal work of the Society.

A. G. LITTLE.



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L'ORIGINALITÉ DE S. FRANÇOIS D'ASSISE¹.

Mesdames, Messieurs,

Ce n'est pas un panégyrique oratoire que je vais prononcer devant vous. Rien n'est plus loin de ma pensée. Je voudrais que tous ensemble nous dépassions la région de l'admiration esthétique et intellectuelle, pour arriver jusqu'à celle de l'émotion intime.

Je voudrais laisser parler saint François lui-même. Evidemment le sujet qui doit nous occuper áujourd'hui ne se serait jamais présenté à son esprit. On lui eût fait beaucoup de peine en lui parlant de son originalité, puisque son grand effort tendit à supprimer en lui toute originalité.

Dès le premier moment de sa vie spirituelle, depuis la fameuse vision de S. Damien où, agenouillé devant le crucifix, il entendit l'appel mystérieux s'insinuer dans son cœur pour lui indiquer la voie à suivre: "François, va et répare ma maison, car tu le vois, elle tombe en ruines," jusqu'au jour où, nu sur la terre nue de la Portioncule, il s'en alla à Dieu, bercé par la psalmodie des frères et par le chant des alouettes, on peut dire que son idée de tous les instants fut un effort de dépersonnalisation. Imiter Jésus Christ fut sa préoccupation constante. Mais qui ne voit que, lorsqu'on arrive à ces profondeurs, le Christ que l'on trouve n'est plus le Jésus historique, c'est la figure idéale que saint Paul a appelé le second Adam. Parole merveilleuse de raccourci. Il y a deux hommes en nous: non pas deux hommes en lutte constante, comme on se le représente souvent, dont l'un serait la vérité, l'autre le mensonge; l'un le bien, l'autre le mal; l'un le bon Dieu, l'autre le Diable. Non, ce point de vue peut bien rendre compte de ce qui se passe dans quelques cir-

¹ Address given at the Kensington Town Hall, 4 April, 1908.

constances solennelles, où la conscience se trouve à l'entrée d'une double voie, l'une qui monte, l'autre qui descend; mais dans les circonstances normales, cette comparaison ne correspond plus à la réalité: il n'y a naturellement qu'un homme en nous: le vieil Adam, pour parler le langage biblique; et c'est à *créer* en nous le nouvel Adam que va tout l'effort religieux. Voilà le mystère de la nouvelle naissance.

Quiconque a compris cela non par son intelligence seulement, mais par son cœur et sa volonté, est une nouvelle créature. Peu importe qu'il soit à tel ou tel point: il est en route. La conscience qui a ainsi pris possession d'elle-même, si elle est chrétienne, fait cet effort en Christ, c'est à dire en évoquant d'abord sa personne historique et en communion avec son esprit. Souvent même elle ne se rend pas compte qu'en cherchant le Christ elle se trouve elle-même et crée son meilleur elle-même. Voilà, pourrait-on dire, où a résidé l'originalité de S. François. Son effort d'imitation du Christ l'a amené à réaliser à la perfection sa propre personnalité sans qu'il ait cru se rechercher lui-même.

Mais il serait difficile de nous maintenir à une pareille hauteur; et, seules, la poésie ou la musique sont capables de faire deviner ces secrets de l'âme.

Qu'il me suffise d'avoir indiqué l'idée, et contentons-nous d'étudier non pas l'originalité de S. François en elle-même, mais sous son aspect pratique le plus frappant.

Voudriez-vous me permettre, Messieurs, de vous confesser une préoccupation légèrement malicieuse? J'ai cru saisir sur les lèvres, dans les yeux de quelques-uns d'entre vous, une question muette, et peut-être l'un ou l'autre m'en veut-il déjà de ce que je n'y aie pas encore répondu! Me trompai-je en pensant qu'à l'annonce de la conférence, ou peut-être même tout à l'heure, vous vous demandiez: "Contre qui, contre quoi va-t-il parler?" Les mœurs actuelles, en effet, nous habituent à voir nos contemporains se grouper bien plutôt d'après leurs haines que d'après leurs admirations. Ce besoin d'être antiquelqu'un ou antiquelquechose

est peut-être le plus vilain trait de nos tendances contemporaines. Vous ne trouverez rien de semblable ici. Nous tâcherons de nous inspirer de l'exemple de Saint François, qui fut essentiellement un pacifique. Ayant la paix en lui-même, il la portait partout avec lui.

On commettrait cependant une erreur en se le représentant comme un redresseur de torts, comme une sorte de juge un peu plus éclairé que les autres, qui aurait donné raison aux bons et condamné les méchants.

Les légendes nous le montrent bien des fois arrivant dans les villes ou les villages et y rétablissant la paix publique; gardez-vous bien de penser qu'il fît comparaître les parties, écoutant longuement leurs plaintes et se donnant beaucoup de peine pour rendre à chacun selon ses mérites. Ne vous imaginez pas davantage que par une sorte de miracle il eût l'inspiration de ce qu'il devait décider. Non, rien de tout cela n'est vrai. En le voyant, ses auditeurs oubliaient leurs querelles. Ils étaient entraînés en un instant dans la sereine et salutaire région où l'air est si pur, si vivifiant, qu'on sent ses forces redoublées, et d'où l'on aperçoit tant de travail à faire, que l'idée ne peut plus même venir de perdre du temps à de pauvres et misérables discussions.

Je voudrais qu'il en fût de même aujourd'hui. Nous irons notre chemin tranquillement, saluant à droite et à gauche tous ceux que nous rencontrerons: nous entrerons dans les champs le long de la route pour aller serrer la main aux vaillants laboureurs . . . peut-être conduirons-nous un instant leur charrue pour qu'ils puissent aller se reposer. Si quelqu'un nous barre le chemin, nous tâcherons de passer humblement, et même en demandant pardon.

François d'Assise demandait bien pardon aux voleurs! Il sut même comprendre que si le loup de Gubbio dévorait gens et bétail ce n'était pas une raison pour le traiter sans courtoisie.

La grande originalité de saint François, c'est son catholicisme. Voilà, pensez-vous, une originalité qu'il a partagée avec des milliers d'autres, et vous n'aurez pas tort; mais ce qui

fait que chez François cela constitue une originalité, c'est qu'il a été catholique comme peut-être personne ne l'avait été avant lui, comme bien peu l'ont été depuis, du moins parmi les hommes dont nous connaissons l'histoire.

Rassurez-vous tout de suite et ne croyez pas que je vienne essayer de dire que le Poverello aurait eu un catholicisme original, individuel, particulier, un catholicisme qui aurait été orienté vers le schisme ou l'hérésie : c'est tout le contraire de ma pensée. Il a été d'un catholicisme très différent de celui que nous connaissons d'ordinaire, mais non pas parce qu'il aurait pris un chemin autre que celui de l'orthodoxie la plus stricte, mais parce qu'il est allé si loin sur cette voie que nous avons de la peine à le suivre des yeux.

Que de fois dans les courses alpestres nous apercevons devant nous, bien haut déjà, vers les cimes, un voyageur qui nous a précédés. Très facilement nous nous figurons qu'il n'a pas suivi les sentiers battus, qu'il en a pris d'autres, dissimulés dans les broussailles, et il arrive qu'en les recherchant nous laissions s'augmenter la distance qui nous sépare de ceux qui ont été simplement plus vaillants que nous.

Ainsi en est il du catholicisme de saint François: s'il ne ressemble guère à celui que nous voyons un peu partout autour de nous, ce n'est pas parce qu'il aurait été appauvri, vidé de son contenu, c'est au contraire parce qu'il est infiniment plus riche, plus fécond, plus en possession de lui-même.

Vous comprenez maintenant pourquoi je n'oserais guère associer au nom de saint François le terme d'orthodoxe. C'est que ce terme a quelquechose de juridique et d'extérieur. Que penseriez-vous de deux époux qui se contenteraient d'observer strictement les termes de leur contrat de mariage et d'obéir aux articles du code lus par l'officier de l'état civil? Légalement inattaquables, on peut bien dire pourtant qu'il n'y aurait entre eux aucun amour vrai et profond, et la préoccupation même qu'ils auraient d'observer la loi écrite, constituerait la preuve suffisante de toute absence d'amour.

Il en est de même dans les choses religieuses: quand la préoccupation de la lettre envahit la vie, elle dénote la faiblesse et l'infirmité de la foi, sinon son absence totale. C'est ce qui a permis à saint Paul de dire l'immortelle parole: La lettre tue, mais l'esprit vivifie.

Une comparaison fera bien comprendre ma pensée. Qu' est-ce qui constitue le fait d'être citoyen d'un pays? Y être né? Mais on peut très bien être né par suite de circonstances spéciales dans un pays auquel on n'appartient réellement pas,— Est-ce d'y habiter; d'y payer les impôts, impôt d'argent et impôt du sang; d'y jouir de tous les droits civils, d'en observer les lois?—Evidemment celui qui réunit en lui tous ces titres est au point de vue légal un citoyen parfait, un citoyen orthodoxe, mais peut-on dire que tout cela ait épuisé le contenu total de la notion de citoyen? Tout cela est beaucoup légalement; spirituellement, ce n'est à peu près rien. Le citoyen est celui qui se sent le membre d'une immense famille qu'il ne connaît pas, qu'il ne connaîtra jamais, famille qui remonte à des milliers d'années en arrière, dont il a reçu des bienfaits innombrables et vis à vis de laquelle il a des devoirs incessants. C'est l'homme qui prenant conscience du gigantesque effort accompli avant lui, veut y participer et le continuer; qui ne tient pas un compte ouvert de ce qu'il doit et de ce qu'il reçoit, ne songe jamais à marchander sa peine, et n'hésite pas à se donner lui-même. L'idée juridique et païenne de la propriété qui est encore à l'heure actuelle celle de nos codes, pourra lui paraître provisoirement nécessaire, comme correspondant à une certaine étape de la civilisation; mais, en son âme et conscience, il l'aura déjà dépassée. Il se sent à la lettre responsable et comptable vis à vis de ses concitoyens de l'emploi de son temps, de son avoir, de ses forces, de ses talents.

Le citoyen, en un mot, c'est celui qui, restant sur le sol où il est né, comprenant qu'il a des devoirs spéciaux envers ce sol natal, l'aime d'abord parce que c'est la terre nourricière d'où il tire sa vie matérielle, et apprend à l'aimer peu à peu, plus virilement, plus saintement, parce que c'est la terre sur laquelle il se voit le plus de devoirs et de responsabilités. Du jour où, après avoir tout reçu de ce sol, il apprend à tout lui donner, ce jour là il a le droit de balbutier le doux mot qui inspirait à Dante une si profonde émotion le mot sacré de patrie.

Le bon citoyen, c'est l'homme qui développe toutes ses énergies individuelles, ses forces physiques, ses facultés intellectuelles et morales, et qui, dans cet effort continu, n'a ni le sentiment de travailler seul, ni la folie de vouloir travailler pour lui seul.

Nous avons l'air d'être bien loin de saint François; en réalité, nous sommes tout près de lui, car tout cela fut l'inspiration même de sa vie. Vous savez avec quelle jalousie il recommande à ses disciples de ne rien s'approprier sur la terre. Malgré le nom de mendiants—qu'ils ont d'ailleurs très vite mérité et que ¡depuis lors ils n'ont jamais cessé de mériter—les frères Mineurs ne furent pas, de la volonté de saint François, un ordre mendiant, mais un ordre laborieux.

On peut dire qu'en lui et par lui l'Eglise a fait effort pour éliminer graduellement la vieille notion parenne de la propriété. La tentative n'a pas réussi, et l'effort s'est bien vite arrêté; mais pour ceux qui croient qu'une grande société n'avance qu'à pas très lents, qu'avant même de tracer une route elle a besoin de faire des tâtonnements, des projets, de planter des jalons, la prédication franciscaine a constitué comme une sorte de préfiguration des temps nouveaux, la préface d'une civilisation qui n'est pas encore venue. attendant qu'elle vienne, gardons-nous bien d'isoler tous les récits de la vie du Poverello qui nous paraissent comme des improvisations de la fantaisie: ceux par exemple où nous le voyons monter sur le toit d'une maison bâtie pour ses frères et les obliger tous à monter avec lui pour jeter bas les tuiles et démolir les murs. Cet acte et tous les autres où il manifeste une véritable horreur pour la propriété—on le vit quitter brusquement une cellule dont on lui avait dit "ta cellule" ne sont pas des boutades de conduite, ce sont des actes en harmonie parfaite avec la pensée générale qui les inspire.

Quand on lit dans les légendes les traits dont je viens de vous parler, il semble qu'on se trouve devant de pieuses excentricités, alors que ce sont les manifestations les plus naturelles, les plus cohérentes d'une pensée qui se réalise.¹

¹ La notion franciscaine de la pauvreté est d'une parfaite clarté. Il a fallu, pour l'obscurcir, les discussions intéressées de gens qui voulaient porter un nom

A ce point de vue l'étude de la vie du grand saint est à reprendre complètement, et on s'apercevra alors que bien loin de le diminuer, l'effort historique le grandira encore, montrera en lui l'homme qui à force de simplicité et de vaillance entrevit quelques-unes des idées que nous aurions besoin de retrouver pour répondre à des préoccupations qui de jour en jour deviennent plus pressantes.

Souhaitons qu'il se trouve un historien doublé d'un philosophe et d'un sociologue, pour étudier avec sérénité et indépendance la notion de propriété de saint François. Il rendrait à notre époque un inestimable service, en montrant la naissance dans le sol strictement chrétien d'idées que souvent les chrétiens d'aujourd'hui ne reconnaissent pas.

L'exaltation du Poverello serait encore bien plus frappante, significative et efficace pour nous, si on parvenait à nous mettre en présence de son catholicisme, à nous en donner la sensation, à ce point où elle devient communion, et où cette communion nous entraînerait d'instinct à suivre celui dans lequel nous verrions un maître de notre pensée et de notre vie.

Ce que nous avons dit tout à l'heure a suffi, j'espère, pour vous montrer que pour saint François la question d'orthodoxie ne se pose même pas. On lui a demandé quelquefois de faire sa profession de foi, et on peut dire, sans faire d'injure à personne, que ces scènes ecclésiastiques ont quelque chose de déplaisant. Il est toujours désagréable d'avoir à exhiber ses papiers. De lui-même François n'aurait jamais pensé à proclamer sa fidélité. Elle était pour lui quelque chose de si profond, de si naturel, que le contraire lui eût été impensable.

L'Eglise était son foyer spirituel, et il s'était très bien aperçu que chaque progrès de sa vie spirituelle avait été marqué par son empreinte. Il avait la sensation de marcher, mais il avait aussi la sensation que celle-ci l'attendait à

glorieux sans pourtant accepter les charges et les devoirs que ce nom implique. Voir les deux règles et les autres opuscules de S. François: Opuscula Sancti Patris Francisci a PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi, in 16°, de 210 pages.

chaque détour du chemin pour lui donner le désir, la force et aussi le programme d'un nouveau progrès. Plus que personne il se sentait fils de cette éducatrice séculaire. Fils, et non pas esclave. Elle agissait, il agissait; et son activité à lui était en quelque sorte la résultante de ce double labeur. A tous les instants de sa vie on le voit ainsi chercher, lutter, souffrir, attendre, prier, et tous ces mots indiquent des efforts très analogues pour s'harmoniser. Il sentait que la vie du passé doit se retrouver, se revivre en quelque sorte en chacun de nous et s'y vivifier.

De là, à son catholicisme un double caractère qui parait une antithèse, et qui est au contraire la condition même de la vie. Il est profondément soumis et il est parfaitement libre.

Isoler l'un des deux termes, c'est fausser la figure historique de François. Ceux qui nous disent : "Saint François a obéi "ont tout à fait raison; mais pourtant à la condition de nous laisser voir le caractère de cette obéissance, et de nous montrer qu'elle ne fut pas une abdication passive de sa volonté.

Ceux qui nous disent: "Saint François a parlé haut, a agi, a voulu; son testament constitue un des documents les plus énergiquement individualistes de l'histoire de l'Eglise; c'est une protestation anticipée contre toutes les hypocrisies par lesquelles on a voulu le tourner; c'est le douloureux cri d'indignation d'un saint mourant qui devine les glossateurs, entrevoit d'avance toute la race nauséabonde, des contrefacteurs cachés dans l'ombre et qui se préparent à s'emparer de son nom, et, en même temps, à renoncer à tout ce que ce nom implique," ceux qui parlent ainsi ont raison aussi. A l'heure la plus angoissée il a écrit: Postquam Dominus dedit mihi de fratribus nemo ostendebat mihi quid deberem facere sed ipse Altissimus revelavit mihi quod deberem vivere secundum formam sancti Evangelii (Testamentum S. Fr.).

"Après que le Seigneur m'eut donné des frères personne ne me montrait ce que je devais faire, mais ce fut le très Haut lui-même qui me révéla que je devais vivre selon la forme du saint Evangile." Rien n'est plus vrai. Et cependant ceux qui s'appuieraient exclusivement sur ces passages, et sur bien d'autres analogues dans les œuvres du saint, pour faire de lui une sorte de précurseur du protestantisme, ceux-là auraient complètement tort. Je sais que c'est un reproche qui m'a été adressé. Si je l'ai mérité, je le regrette, et tâcherai de réparer ma faute. Espérons que la simplicité que je mets à ce mea culpa engagera mes honorables contradicteurs à montrer une égale bonne volonté, et qu'ils cesseront une bonne fois de croire qu'ils font grand honneur à saint François en le représentant comme une sorte d'instrument passif entre les mains de la hiérarchie ecclésiastique.

Le glorieux Innocent III. n'était certes pas un pontife quelconque, et cependant ses nuits étaient troublées par des songes effrayants; il lui semblait que la vénérable basilique du Latran, tête et mère de toutes les églises dans le monde entier, symbole de l'établissement ecclésiastique, était secouée par de terribles convulsions et menaçait ruine. Pensez-vous qu'alors il se dit qu'il était le seul chef, l'unique maître, qu'il lui suffirait d'appeler ses camériers pour réparer les ruines? Pensez-vous qu'il crut qu'ayant la plénitude de l'autorité, il devait avoir toutes les initiatives, toutes les clartés? Non. Innocent III. ne songea même pas à l'administration de l'Eglise pour parer au désastre menaçant. Il vit un malheureux en guenilles qui était sans autorité, sans titre, sans mandat, et après quelques hésitations il comprit que de là, de cet homme qui n'était pas même prêtre viendrait le salut de l'Eglise. Les entrevues de François d'Assise et d'Innocent III., telles que les a esquissées Giotto, resteront à tout jamais comme le symbole vivant de la façon dont l'autorité ecclésiastique, au temps du grand pontife, avait compris sa mission. La voix qui s'est élevée dans une bourgade de l'Ombrie a beau être humble, faible, sans prestige, manquer de toute science théologique: on ne la brise pas, on ne lui répond ni par des haussements d'épaule, ni par des sourires de pitié, ni par des mesures violentes. On l'écoute, on hésite, on attend, on l'éprouve.

Allez à Assise contempler la fresque de Giotto. Regardez

l'entourage du pape; scrutez les yeux, le pli des lèvres qui semblent dire: "Que vous arrêtez-vous, très saint Père, à écouter cet impertinent, cet importun? Que pourrait-il savoir que nous ne sachions pas? Jetez-le à la porte! Faites-le enfermer, de peur que sa voix ne séduise les faibles! L'écouter serait de votre part avouer que vous avez moins de lumières que lui; ce serait nous faire à nous, à nous qui passons notre vie à fortifier l'autorité du Siège apostolique, ce serait nous faire le plus cruel des affronts. Eh quoi! à nos vues basées sur celles des Pères, vous préféreriez les billevesées de ce prophète de hasard, de cet ignorant, fou d'orgueil? Prenez garde à ces nouveautés!"

Or, Innocent III. n'écouta point la majorité du Sacré Collège: il prêta, au contraire, l'oreille à l'homme vil et méprisé, vilis et despectus disent les documents, qui était descendu des montagnes de l'Ombrie; et sans doute cet acte par lequel il humiliait l'autorité officielle devant une autre autorité qui ne la contredit pas, mais la dépasse, l'autorité de la sainteté, cet acte, dis-je, est celui par lequel il a le mieux mérité de l'Eglise. Nouveautés, oh! oui, il y en avait beaucoup dans la pensée de saint François; nouveautés tellement nouvelles qu'aujourd'hui encore, si on les redisait, non comme des formules apprises par cœur et dépouillées de leur sens à force d'avoir servi, encore aujourd'hui elles apparaîtraient à beaucoup comme de dangereuses rêveries.

Sans y penser je me suis oublié à vous parler d'Innocent III. plus que de son humble interlocuteur. Peut-être n'est-ce pas à tort, car enfin l'attitude du saint dépend en partie de celle de l'autorité. Si celle-ci avait tenu ses portes jalousement fermées, ou ne les eût ouvertes qu'à des visiteurs muets, allant écouter prosternés la voix d'un oracle, on ne voit pas ce qu'aurait pu être la vie de l'Apôtre de la pauvreté!

Il y a des degrés dans l'absolutisme. Innocent III. qui fut un des théoriciens de l'absolutisme pontifical, ne croyait pas que la plénitude du pouvoir dût l'empêcher d'écouter.

Au temps de François d'Assise on se représentait l'activité religieuse comme un concours de forces, une association de volontés, un effort solidaire. On se représentait alors l'Eglise sous la forme de la barque mystique ayant son pilote et ses chefs, mais où chaque passager adulte tient une rame et a sa responsabilité; où il a non seulement le droit, mais le devoir, de prévenir le reste de l'équipage, il voit quelque danger à l'horizon.

Aujourd'hui on nous a changé tout cela, et le souvenir même de la "navicella di San Pietro" tend à disparaître. L'an passé, on pouvait acheter à Paris des billets pour le paradis, où l'Eglise était symbolisée sous la forme d'un train, dans lequel il suffirait de monter pour arriver—dans diverses classes naturellement—à destination. Une fois dans le train, on arrive fatalement, sans effort, sans coopération. Voilà dans son expression la plus simpliste, une conception de la vie chrétienne en antithèse parfaite avec l'idée que s'en faisait François d'Assise.

Chez lui il y a soumission à l'Eglise, comme je vous le disais tout à l'heure, mais soumission active, joyeuse; adhésion plutôt que soumission, adhésion du fils dont le cœur sait d'avance que son père a raison, mais auquel l'idée ne vient pas d'obéir sans comprendre, ni surtout de regarder comme normale l'obéissance dans les ténèbres. Il obéit, mais il ne croit pas faire injure à son père en lui avouant ses besoins, peut-être même de simples désirs; il ne croit pas démériter en lui donnant çà et là un avertissement solennel.

Le double fait de la parfaite soumission et de la parfaite liberté, qui paraît si illogique à des esprits étroits, éclate partout dans la vie du Poverello. L'avoir compris, c'est avoir compris François d'Assise et le mouvement issu de lui; le méconnaître, c'est méconnaître non seulement François d'Assise, mais aussi le caractère le plus original de la vie de l'Eglise.

Le double effort, de l'individu qui n'abdique rien, mais n'est satisfait que le jour où il peut verser son travail personnel dans le travail collectif, et de l'autorité sociale accueillant—non sans examen et sans épreuve—l'apport de l'individu, ce double effort, dis-je, est marqué avec une clarté particulière dans l'histoire du voyage de saint François à Rome pour l'approbation de son institut.

Le bienheureux François,—je traduis littéralement le récit des *Trois Compagnons*,¹—le bienheureux François voyant que le Seigneur augmentait le nombre et le mérite de ses frères,—ils étaient douze, hommes de la plus haute perfection et n'avaient qu'une seule et même pensée—lui, leur conducteur et leur père, dit aux onze autres: "Je vois, mes frères, que dans sa miséricorde le bon Dieu veut augmenter notre société. Allons donc vers notre sainte mère l'Eglise Romaine et annonçons au souverain pontife les choses que le Seigneur a déjà faites par nous, afin que nous puissions continuer en vertu de sa volonté et de ses ordres ce que nous avons commencé."

Voilà, n'est il pas vrai, l'esprit de la soumission la plus parfaite.

Tournez quelques pages et vous trouvez l'esprit de la plus ardente liberté. François a rencontré à Rome divers concours: le cardinal Jean de S. Paul l'a présenté au pape, et celui-ci le bénit; mais on sent que la bénédiction s'adresse plus à la personne qu'aux idées, plus aux intentions qu'au programme. Le pontife hésite: la règle lui paraît irréalisable, il congédie le Poverello; veut attendre de nouvelles lumières pour se décider.

Que va faire François? Quittera-t-il Rome, abandonnant son idée?

Il prie, il lutte, il cherche, et retourne au Vatican, prêt à parler avec autorité devant celui qui incarne pourtant toute autorité: 2

¹ Videns autem beatus Franciscus quod Dominus fratres suos numero et merito augmentaret, cum jam essent duodecim viri perfectissimi, sentientes id ipsum; dixit illis undecim ipse duodecimus, dux et pater eorum: "Video, fratres, quod Dominus congregationem nostram vult misericorditer àugmentare. Euntes ergo ad matrem nostram sanctam Romanam Ecclesiam, notificemus summo Pontifici, quae Dominus per nos facere coepit, ut de voluntate et praecepto ipsius, quod coepimus prosequamur."—Tres Socii, xii. 1.

²Volens autem dominus Papa scire utrum concessa et concedenda essent secundum Dei voluntatem, priusquam sanctus ab eo recederet dixit ei et sociis: "Filioli mei, vita vestra videtur nobis nimis dura et aspera; licet enim credamus vos esse tanti fervoris quod de vobis non oporteat dubitare, tamen considerare debemus pro illis qui secuturi vos sunt, ne haec via nimis aspera ipsis videatur". Cumque videret eorum fidei constantiam et anchoram spei firmissime roboratam in Christo,

"Il y avait une fois dans un désert une femme pauvre et belle. Un grand roi la vit et fut épris de sa beauté. A la pensée qu'elle pourrait donner le jour à de jolis enfants, il voulut l'épouser.

Le mariage se fit; beaucoup d'enfants naquirent, et quand ils furent grands, la mère leur dit: "Mes enfants ne rougissez pas, car vous êtes les fils du roi. Allez à sa cour et il vous donnera tout le nécessaire."

Quand ils furent arrivé chez le roi, celui-ci admira leur beauté, et voyant qu'ils lui ressemblaient, il leur dit: "De qui êtes-vous?" Ils lui répondirent qu'ils étaient les enfants de la pauvre femme demeurant dans le désert. Alors le roi les embrassa avec une grande joie, disant: Soyez sans crainte, car vous êtes mes fils. Si les bâtards sont nourris à ma table, à plus forte raison vous qui êtes mes enfants légitimes.

ita ut nollent a suo fervore divertere, dixit beato Francisco: "Fili, vade et ora Deum ut tibi revelet si id quod quaeritis de sua voluntate procedit, quatenus nos scientes Domini voluntatem, tuis desideriis annuamus".

Orante itaque Sancto Dei, sicut ei suggesserat dominus Papa, locutus est ei Dominus in spiritu per similitudinem, dicens: "Quaedam mulier paupercula et formosa erat in quodam deserto, cuius pulchritudinem rex quidam magnus admirans, concupivit eam accipere in uxorem, quia putabat ex ipsa pulchros filios generare. Contracto autem et consummato matrimonio, multi filii sunt geniti et adulti, quos mater sic alloquitur dicens: Filii, nolite verecundari, quia filii regis estis. Ite ergo ad curiam eius, et ipse vobis omnia necessaria ministrabit. Cum ergo venissent ad regem, miratus est rex eorum pulchritudinem, vidensque in eis suam similitudinem dixit illis: Cuius estis filii? Cui cum respondissent, se esse filios mulieris pauperculae in deserto morantis, rex cum magno gaudio amplexatus est eos, dicens: Nolite timere, quia filii mei estis; si enim de mensa mea nutriuntur extranei, multo magis vos, qui estis mei legitimi. Mandavit itaque rex mulieri praedictae ut omnes filios ex se susceptos ad suam curiam mitteret nutriendos".

His igitur sic ostensis per visum beato Francisco oranti, intellexit vir sanctus se per illam mulierem pauperculam designari.

Et oratione completa, representavit se summo Pontifici, et exemplum quod ei Dominus ostenderat, sibi per ordinem intimavit, dixitque: "Ego sum, Domine, illa mulier paupercula, quam Dominus amans per suam misericordiam decoravit, et ex ipsa placuit sibi filios legitimos generare. Dixit autem mihi Rex regum, quod omnes filios, quos ex me generabit, nutriet, quia si nutrit extraneos, bene debet legitimos nutrire. Si enim Dominus peccatoribus donat bona temporalia propter nutriendorum filiorum amorem, multo magis viris evangelicis, quibus haec debentur ex merito, largietur."—Tres Socii, xii.

"Je suis, très saint Père, ajouta saint François, cette pauvre femme que le Seigneur a aimée, que dans sa miséricorde il a trouvée belle, et par laquelle il lui a plu de s'engendrer de légitimes enfants. Le Roi des rois m'a dit qu'il nourrira tous les enfants que je lui donnerai, car s'il nourrit des bâtards il doit bien nourrir ses enfants légitimes".

La traduction que vous venez d'entendre, Messieurs, est tout à fait littérale. J'aurais eu scrupule à ne pas vous la donner dans sa naïve simplicité. Tous les détails de la parabole ne sont pas clairs, mais ce qui est bien clair, c'est qu'elle ne constituait pas précisément un éloge pour l'entourage d'Innocent III. Avais-je tort de parler de la liberté de saint François et de dire qu'il avait de l'obéissance à l'Eglise une notion passablement différente de celle qu'en ont quelques catholiques aujourd'hui?

Voilà où fut son originalité et celle de tous ses vrais disciples.

Sainte Claire, sans oublier jamais qu'elle n'était qu'une femme sans autorité dans l'Eglise, n'hésita pas, elle aussi, à parler aux divers pontifes qui se succédèrent sur la chaire infaillible, avec la même liberté; et vous connaissez tous, je l'espère, cette scène, une des plus belles pages de l'histoire de la femme,—trop belle et trop grande peut-être pour avoir tenté les peintres et les poètes—où on voit Grégoire IX., venant avec sa cour visiter l'humble recluse de S. Damien, et s'efforçant de lui persuader qu'elle doit accepter une règle moins sévère que celle de saint François; mais l'humble femme, prosternée devant celui qui tient les "somme chiavi," eut le courage de lui dire "Absolvez-moi de mes péchés, très saint Père, mais je n'ai aucun desir d'être dispensée de suivre le Christ." 1

¹ Felicis recordationis dominus papa Gregorius, vir sicut sede dignissimus, ita et meritis venerandus, paterno affectu sanctam istam arctius diligebat. Cui cum suaderet ut propter eventus temporum et pericula saeculorum aliquas possessiones assentiret habere, quas et ipse liberaliter offerebat, fortissimo animo restitit et nullatenus acquievit. Ad quam respondente Pontifice: "Si votum formidas, nos te a voto absolvimus," "Sancte Pater," ait, "nequaquam a Christi sequela in perpetuum absolvi desidero".—Acta Sanctorum, Augusti t. ii., p. 758. Cf. Prof. Fr. Pennacchi, Legenda Sanctæ Claræ, Assisi, 1910, p. 22.

La porte du monastère se referma. Le silence se refit autour de S. Damien; la brise du soir redescendit comme les autres jours du Subasio, elle passa doucement sur les oliviers et les cyprès, elle enveloppa tout . . . Mais sainte Claire n'oubliait pas . . . Elle avait résisté à l'affectueuse sollicitude du pontife . . . : elle sentait qu'elle n'avait pas triomphé. Sa règle, . . . la règle que lui avait donnée François, était là, admirée par l'autorité, mais non approuvée. Et dès lors la préoccupation d'obtenir pour cette règle la confirmation complète et définitive devint le ressort de sa vie. Nous ignorons les démarches, les efforts de détail. Dix ans, vingt ans, s'écoulèrent. Du fond de son couvent la Franciscaine correspondait dans le monde entier avec quiconque voulait suivre la voie de la pauvreté évangélique, et encourageait des vues très peu agréables à l'autorité. Grégoire IX. était mort. Innocent IV. lui avait succédé, qui n'était certes pas mieux disposé que lui à approuver la règle observée à S. Damien. vint à Assise, visita lui aussi sainte Claire.

Que se passa-t-il?

Nous n'en savons rien; nous ne savons que le résultat, à savoir que le 9 août 1253, fut enfin donnée l'approbation, et que deux jours après Claire rendait le dernier soupir.

Elle avait accompli son œuvre. Elle mourait victorieuse, non pas victorieuse contre quelqu'un, contre Gregoire IX., ou contre Innocent IV., ou contre l'autorité, mais victorieuse avec elle et avec eux.

Et là encore vous retrouvez ces deux éléments qui rendent le catholicisme de François si original: la soumission dans la liberté, la liberté dans la soumission. Nous voilà bien loin de cette idée que le premier hommage à faire à l'autorité serait de faire le vide dans nos intelligences et dans nos cœurs pour recevoir ce qu'il plairait à l'autorité d'y jeter.

Encore une fois il serait absurde de faire de François d'Assise un révolté ou un protestant inconscient, mais il ne le serait pas moins de se le représenter comme un pur et simple écho de l'autorité, ou comme un homme qui aurait renoncé à sa propre conscience. Dans ses écrits revient bien

des fois l'idée que l'autorité peut se tromper et qu'il faudra lui résister; mais il ajoute aussitôt que tout en refusant d'obéir il ne faut pas prendre congé de l'autorité ou secouer son joug.¹

Contradictions, dira-t-on. Contradiction logique peutêtre, mais non pas contradictions profondes et réelles, non pas contradictions dans l'histoire, cette logique de Dieu—comme on l'a appelée. Contradictions qui se retrouvent exactement les mêmes dans la vie de famille et dans celle de la patrie où, tout naturellement, sans y penser, nous laissons l'autorité agir sur nous, sans nous lasser pourtant jamais de l'avertir, de la corriger, de la transformer.

C'est dans cet esprit qu'un grand catholique contemporain, le cardinal Newman, écrivait en 1874 (veuillez noter cette date): "La conscience est en nous le vicaire aborigène du Christ, prophète dans ses informations, monarque dans ses décrets, prêtre dans ses bénédictions et ses anathèmes; et si jamais le sacerdoce éternel devait cesser dans toute l'Eglise, dans la conscience demeurerait le principe sacerdotal et il conserverait le sceptre "(cité par *Il Rinnovamento*, déc., 1907).

On a souvent dit que la légende est plus vraie que l'histoire, et cette pensée est exacte si toutefois on constate que parfois la légende nous renseigne assez mal sur ce qu'elle prétend nous dire, mais nous renseigne très bien sur ceux qui nous le disent.

Or une des légendes les plus populaires du Moyen âge, c'est que saint François était debout, vivant dans son tombeau, prêt à en sortir pour reprendre ses prédications et son enseignement.

Le 12 déc., 1818, le pic, non de la critique, mais des maçons, fit voler en éclats la vieille tradition. On trouva le Poverello réduit à l'état de squelette.

Et pourtant, la gracieuse légende avait raison, François

¹ Par exemple Admonition III: Si vero praelatus praecipiat aliquid subdito contra animam suam, licet ei non obediat, tamen ipsum non dimittat; et si ab aliquibus inde persecutionem sustinuerit, magis eos diligat propter Deum, nam qui prius persecutionem sustinet quam velit a fratribus suis separari, vere permanet in perfecta obedientia quia ponit animam suam pro fratribus suis (ed. Quaracchi, p. 7). Voir aussi: Règle I, V. Epistola ad fideles, VIII. Règle 1223, X.

d'Assise n'est pas mort, car son œuvre n'est pas achevée. Il est caché quelque part, peut-être bien près de nous, et il attend pour sortir du tombeau et recommencer sa prédication que les temps soient accomplis. Ils s'accompliront tout seuls, Messieurs, mais peut-être vaudrait-il mieux les aider à s'accomplir? Le vaillant cultivateur qui devance l'aurore sait bien qu'il ne fera pas lever le soleil un instant plus tôt, mais du moins il sera prêt à creuser son sillon dès que poindront les premières lueurs.

Si l'aurore nous trouve ainsi au travail, nous comprendrons jusqu'au fond ce que fut le génie de ce François d'Assise, qui viendra, peut-être plus vite qu'on ne pense, pour réconcilier la soumission et la liberté, la science et la foi, l'homme non seulement avec son Dieu, mais avec toute la création. C'est lui qui a dit cette phrase mystérieuse que je n'ose vous traduire, car la traduction risquerait d'être infirme et même tout à fait mauvaise: "Sancta obedientia facit hominem subditum omnibus hominibus hujus mundi et non tantum hominibus, sed etiam bestiis et feris ut possint facere de eo quidquid voluerunt; quantum fuerit eis datum desuper a Domino".1

PAUL SABATIER.

¹ Laudes de virtutibus, ed. Boehmer, p. 65. Il est sans doute superflu de noter que François n'a pas entendu que l'homme soit soumis aux animaux: nous avons ici la clef de son amour pour les bêtes et pour la nature. Celle-ci n'est pas seulement la réalisation et comme l'expansion d'une pensée divine, elle est un corps immense ayant son unité mystérieuse, sa vie et sa mission. L'homme participe à cette mission générale d'une façon éminente, et a pour cela comme collaborateurs nos frères inférieurs auxquels il doit obéissance dans la mesure où ceux-ci l'aident à réaliser le programme divin.

Dans son ardent mysticisme le catholicisme de François n'englobait pas seulement l'humanité, mais tout ce qui existe. Il concevait la vie comme une ascension dans le travail et l'effort. La maladie, la douleur, la mort deviennent des collaboratrices et le diable lui même n'est plus l'adversaire de Dieu, mais son lieutenant; il a son rôle dans la vie religieuse un peu analogue à celui du baron et du bourreau dans la société civile. Ex parte Dei omnipotentis dico vobis, Daemones, ut exerceatis circa corpus meum quidquid datum fuit vobis a Domino Jesu Christo (Spec. Perf. 60). Daemones sunt castaldi Domini nostri, sicut enim Potestas mittit castaldum suum ad puniendum illum qui peccavit, sic Dominus per castaldos suos, id est per Daemones, qui in hoc ministerio sunt ejus ministri, quemcumque diligit corripit et castigat. (Spec. Perf. 67). Ms. Ognissanti, 20 b

ST. FRANCIS AND POVERTY.1

Thomas of Celano speaking of St. Francis' love for poverty says: "This holy father placed in the valley of tears scorned the common riches of the sons of men as so much destitution; and ambitious of more exalted heights, he longed after poverty with all his heart; considering that she was the familiar friend of the Son of God, he strove in everlasting charity to espouse her, now that she was cast off by all the world. Therefore having become a lover of her beauty, in order that he might cleave yet more closely to her as his spouse and that they two might be united in one spirit, not only did he leave his father and mother but even put all things from him. Therefore he clasped her with chaste embraces, nor for a moment did he endure not to be her husband.

"He would tell his sons that she was the way of perfection, the pledge and earnest of eternal riches. No one was so greedy of gold as he of poverty; no one more careful in guarding a treasure than he in guarding this pearl of the Gospel." ²

In all the Legend of Celano, I know of no finer passage than this. It brings one very close indeed to the fine enthusiasm and vital delight of the *Fioretti*, and it marks Thomas of Celano off as a true Franciscan of the primitive type: for no other could have written of poverty in this style. Only in the pure Franciscan do you get that simple, unaffected idealisation of poverty; that joy in poverty as a delightful presence. Many writers both pagan and Christian have written in praise of poverty. But the pagan writers always remind me of the paintings of Poussin and Claude; super-

¹ This paper contains the substance of a lecture given at a meeting of the Society on the 28th of April, 1910.

² II. Cel. ii. 25.

ficially pretty but radically insincere: whilst the majority of Christian writers present poverty as an admirable discipline rather than as a satisfying possession. Yet it is just as a satisfying possession that poverty appears in all the purest Franciscan literature—e.g. in the legends of Celano and the Three Companions; in the Sacrum Commercium and in the Fioretti.

This attitude of soul towards poverty is in truth the supreme test of the genuine Franciscan spirit whether in life or in art.

To anyone who wishes to get at the real content of Franciscan poverty, I would say, read and re-read the *Fioretti*: there better than in any formal treatise will you get to the understanding of what poverty meant to St. Francis: for as in all the deeper substantive life, there is in Franciscan poverty, something very elusive to logical reasoning: it is not easily bound by logical measurements. It is full of reserves excepting to those who are its friends, and to these it only reveals itself with the growth of friendship.

Only St. Francis could adequately express all that poverty meant to him and even he probably could not put it into words.

We must therefore be content to gather a few crumbs from his table, especially in what concerns the more intimate mysteries and joys of the spirit which he found in poverty.

This much, however, any reverent student of the *Fioretti* may learn—that to St. Francis poverty was indeed a Life Beautiful and the revealer of the truth and joy of life. To him poverty stood for a great world of spiritual experience; it gave him a larger understanding of life, human and divine; it endowed him with a self-conquest and self-possession which is the crown of human endeavour.

There is one chapter of the *Fioretti* which sets forth the spiritual values of Franciscan poverty in a particularly felicitous fashion. It is the chapter which tells us "How St. Francis and Brother Masseo placed some bread which they had begged on a stone beside a fountain, and how St. Francis greatly praised Poverty". The story reads thus: "Coming one day

to a certain town and being very hungry, they (St. Francis and Brother Masseo) went according to the rule to beg bread for the love of God, St. Francis going down one street and Brother Masseo down another. But because St. Francis was a man of mean appearance and small of stature, and accounted a vile beggar by those who knew him not, he received nothing but a few mouthfuls and crumbs of dry bread; whilst Brother Masseo, being tall and comely in person, had good pieces and large and many, given to him, and entire loaves. When they had begged enough, they went together to a place outside the town, where there was a fair fountain, that they might eat, and beside which also was a broad and convenient stone, on which each placed all the alms which he had begged. And St. Francis, seeing that the pieces of bread which Brother Masseo had, were larger and better than his own, had great joy, and spoke thus: 'O Brother Masseo, we are not worthy of so great treasure'. And as he repeated these words several times, Brother Masseo answered him: 'Father, how can this be called treasure, when we are in such poverty, and lack the things of which we have need we, who have neither cloth, nor knives, nor plates, nor porringer, nor house, nor table, nor manservant, nor maidservant?' Then said St. Francis: 'And this is what I call great treasure, that there is nothing here provided by human industry, but everything is provided by Divine Providence, as we may manifestly see in this bread we have begged, in this stone which serves so beautifully for our table, and in this so clear fountain: wherefore I will that we pray to God that He make us to love with our whole heart the treasure of Holy Poverty, which is so noble that thereunto did God Himself become a servitor '."

That is the first part of the story, and it reveals to us two of the constituent qualities of the poverty loved by St. Francis: its joyous intimacy with Nature and its habit of seeing in the visible creation the Hand of the Creator. Nowhere in any literature has real appreciation of and joy in Nature found more sincere expression than in this story of St. Francis' delight in the "fair fountain" and the "broad

and convenient stone". One is conscious of the quivering delight revealed in the very simplicity of the expression. But the important point is that the delight of the writer of the *Fioretti* is the delight of St. Francis himself, as we know from his history; and not only of St. Francis but of all his true disciples.

In fact this delight in Nature is so consistent a mark of those who adhered to St. Francis' ideal of poverty, that we cannot disconnect it from that ideal. It was an elemental fact in their life.

The other constituent quality which the story, as we have read it so far, reveals, is a trustful dependence upon Divine Providence with which this delight in Nature is so exquisitely blended. Francis sees the bounty of God in the fair fountain and the broad and convenient stone. But from the day that St. Francis became poor, he had an ever-increasing sense of what I will call the sacramental character of created life. This sense is written large over his whole life-story from the moment of his conversion. The visible world uttered to him the mysteries of faith. The leper, to his eyes, bore the suffering of Christ; the worm which is trodden under foot, bore in its shame, the contempt to which Christ too was subjected; the sun shone with the power of God; the limpid stream had in it something of the virtue of purity. But the first truth St. Francis learned in the school of poverty, was that which he so fervently uttered on the day of his disinheritance: "Now I can truly say: Our Father who art in heaven". From that day he saw the bounty of God in every service rendered him, whether by the inanimate or the animate creation, and the earth became to him a bountiful heaven. We shall see further on how much this conviction entered into his teaching concerning the receiving of alms. But for the moment I want you to recognise that the delight in Nature and the sense of Nature as a sacramental revelation of God, entered as constituent elements into St. Francis' life of poverty.

Now for the second part of the story. It tells us how St. Francis and Brother Masseo after their meal, continued

¹ Cf. II. Celano, exxiv. Speculum Perfectionis (ed. Sabatier), cap. exviii.

their journey to visit the tombs of the Apostles, to pray for a greater love of poverty—and as they set forth, St. Francis thus discourses of his beloved: "My brother, let us go to St. Peter and St. Paul, and pray them to teach us, and to give us to possess the immeasurable treasure of holy poverty, inasmuch as it is a treasure so exalted and so divine that we are not worthy to possess it in our vile bodies, seeing that it is that celestial virtue by which all earthly and transitory things are trodden underfoot, and all impediments are lifted away from the soul, so that she can freely unite herself to the Eternal God. And this is the virtue which makes the soul, while still retained on earth, converse with the angels in heaven; and this it is which accompanied Christ to His Cross, with Christ was buried, with Christ was raised up, with Christ ascended into heaven, which being given in this life to the souls which are enamoured of it, facilitates their flight to heaven, seeing that it guards the arms of true humility and charity, and therefore let us pray the most holy Apostles of Christ, who were perfect lovers of this pearl of the Gospel of Christ, that they will beg for us to be true lovers, observers and humble disciples of this most precious, most lovable, evangelical poverty."1

In this discourse poverty is shown to us as a connecting link between heaven and earth. It is a state of freedom in which men more easily unite themselves to God and converse with the angels, since it frees the soul from the domination of the things which are earthly and transitory, and arms the soul with true humility and charity. To understand the point of St. Francis' praise, we must remember that he had in mind the world which he had known so well and from which poverty had delivered him—the world of earthly ambition and greed. In his mind's eye he was pitting the life of poverty against that other life: and as that other life was fostered in its worldliness by pride and selfishness, the life of his ideal poverty was nurtured in humility and charity and thus brought into converse with the angels in heaven. Finally be it noticed how all this life and effort centres in the

¹ Fioretti, cap. 13.

love of Christ: and of St. Francis' adoring love of his Divine Lord and Master all the world is aware. Here then we may gain some slight insight into that life of poverty which St. Francis loved—and we must remember that without these spiritual values poverty is not Franciscan poverty. Take away from St. Francis' idea of poverty its intimacy with Nature, its sacramental view of Nature, its consciousness of Divine providence, its love of Christ; its humility and charity, or its keen intuition of the world of faith; and you have no longer the Lady Poverty of St. Francis, but only that desecration of poverty which is one of the world's sorrows.

I come now to the external aspect of Franciscan poverty, and here we may tread with somewhat less diffidence.

Now the fundamental element in Franciscan poverty on its economic side, was the renunciation of property. Franciscan was to have no claim to any kind of proprietorship over material goods. He might enjoy the use of such things as were needful for bodily life-food, raiment, lodgings and so forth: but he must have no proprietorship even in the things needful. This principle is expressed thus in the Rule of the Friars Minor: "The brothers shall appropriate nothing to themselves, neither house nor place nor anything at all ".1 And this rule applied to the friars corporately as well as individually. The fraternity as such was to have no possessions, even as its individual members had none. This rule of corporate poverty was new even amongst religious orders in the Church, and even amongst the penitential congregations of the Middle Ages with which the Franciscan Order had a close affinity. The members of these orders and congregations might renounce property as individuals; they always kept the right to own property in common. But St. Francis would have nothing to do with property in any sense. The brethren, he said, must be pilgrims and strangers in the world.2 The Speculum Perfectionis tells us: "He was minded the brethren should in no wise, neither in houses, nor churches, nor gardens, nor in

aught else whereof they had the use, trespass beyond the bounds of poverty, nor hold any places whatsoever by right of ownership, but should sojourn therein as pilgrims and strangers". Later on when the Order grew in numbers, this rule was found to have its inconveniences, but Francis would not relax it, not even when urged to do so by Cardinal Ugolino.² And in like manner St. Clare for thirty years contended against those who in this matter deemed the Franciscan rule impracticable.³ So that there can be no shadow of doubt as to St. Francis' intention.⁴

In truth the whole scheme of original Franciscan life was formed upon this acceptance of corporate poverty. The brethren were to be tied to no place by bonds of ownership, they were to be in very deed vagrants upon the face of the earth.

This brings me to what I consider was the most potent factor in the evolution of St. Francis' ideal, his intercourse with and affection for the beggar. It is perhaps against one of the fondest prejudices of our race and time,⁵ but it is nevertheless a fact, that the condition of the beggar appealed very strongly to St. Francis, and I am not going too far when I say that he formed his conception of poverty from the condition of the beggar. You know how his first experience of the lot of the poor was gained when he went on a pilgrimage to St. Peter's in Rome, and spent a day amongst the beggars at the door, dressed in a beggar's clothes, and asking alms from the passers-by. It was a day's experience, and in the evening he became once again the son of the wealthy merchant: yet that day's experience undoubtedly formed his

¹ Speculum Perfectionis, cap. x.; cf. I. Celano, cap. xvi., concerning the reason why St. Francis removed the brethren from the shelter at Rivo-Torto.

² Speculum Perfect. (ed. Sabatier), cap. lxviii.

³ Cf. The Legend of the Lady St. Clare, transl. by Mrs. Balfour, Introduction, ii.

⁴ See what Eccleston says in his Chronicle (concerning Bro. Albert of Pisa, Provincial of England from 1236 to 1239, and the title-deeds of the Friars' house at Reading); cf. The Chronicle of Eccleston done into English by Fr. Cuthbert, O.S.F.C., p. 103, and Appendix III. p. 155; and Tractatus Fr. Thomæ de Eccleston, ed. A. G. Little, pp. 99-100, 171-2.

⁵ Cf. Dubois, St. Francis of Assisi, Social Reformer, pp. 171-173.

later life. When Francis embraced poverty, he meant to take upon himself the condition of a beggar, dependent upon the goodwill of others for his daily sustenance. Poverty to him meant beggary: and we must not shy at the fact if we would rightly understand St. Francis. Thomas of Celano tells us: "He (St. Francis) used to say that to be ashamed of begging was hostile to salvation".1 The same biographer relates how when the saint was dwelling in the houses of cardinals or bishops, he insisted on going out to beg his bread: and once when Cardinal Ugolino remonstrated with him for so doing, Francis replied: "I have shown you honour since I have honoured a greater Lord: for God is well pleased with poverty and especially with that poverty which is voluntary begging".2 Another time he said to the brethren: "Dearest brothers, the Son of God, who for our sakes made Himself poor in this world, was nobler than we. For His sake we have chosen the way of poverty, and ought not to be ashamed to go for alms."3

And there is a touching story told of a brother, perhaps one of those who at first were bashful in begging, returning from Assisi with alms: and as he came near the Portunicula he broke forth into song, singing with a loud voice. Francis, hearing him, suddenly jumped up and ran out and kissed the brother's shoulder and taking the wallet on his own shoulders, he exclaimed: "Blessed be my brother who goes readily (for alms), seeks humbly and returns rejoicing ".4" In his rule, after ordaining that the brethren shall have no proprietorship, the saint continues: "And as pilgrims and strangers in this world serving the Lord in poverty and humility, let them go confidently in quest of alms . . . this, my dearest brothers, is the height of the most sublime poverty: poor in goods but exalted in virtue".5 When then we are told: "It is not mendicity which is the basis of the economic life of the Friars Minor, but labour," 6 we must confess that

¹ II. Celano, xli.

² Ibid., xliii.

³ Ibid., xliv.

⁴ Ibid., xlvi.

⁵ Rule of 1223, cap. vi.

⁶ Cf. Les Idées de S. François sur la Pauvreté, par P. Ubald d'Alençon (Paris, 1909.) P. Sabatier, Vie de S. François, chap. viii. p. 138.

the assertion is hardly true to the ideal of St. Francis. Begging was so essential an element in the poverty of St. Francis, that the beggar seemed to him God's witness upon earth of the poverty of Christ which was his rule, and for this reason he always treated beggars with a peculiar reverence.¹

And yet it is true that whilst dependence upon alms was an essential character of St. Francis' poverty, nevertheless he made it a rule that the brethren should be always employed in honest labour. Idle beggary had no part in the saint's ideal. Nay, he abhorred idleness as the very root of all evil. And not only did he insist upon work, but it is evident that he insisted upon the brethren working for their bread. In his first rule he has this passage: "Let the brothers who know how to work labour and exercise themselves in that art which they may understand, if it be not contrary to the salvation of their soul, and they can exercise it becomingly. For the prophet says: For thou shalt eat the labours of thy hands, blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee. And the Apostle says: If any man will not work, neither let him eat." The rule goes on to say: "Let every man abide in the art of employment wherein he is called . . . and they may have the tools and implements necessary for their work".3

The rule also contemplates the brethren serving in the houses of others, for it says: "Let the brothers in whatever places they may be among others to serve or to work, not be chamberlains nor cellarers nor overseers in the houses of those whom they serve". We know that these passages in the rule were not mere dead letters. The Vita Fratris Egidii tells us how Brother Giles whilst sojourning with the monks of the Quattro Santi in Rome, used to keep the monks supplied with water from the distant fountain of San Sisto; it tells us too how on his journey he earned his bread by peddling water through the city or hawking baskets or threshing beans, or burying the dead: and then the legend

¹ Cf. II. Celano, lii.; Spec. Perfect. cap. xxxvii.

² Regula I. cap. vii. Cf. Barth. of Pisa in Anal. Franc. iv. p. 407-10.

³ Regula I. cap. vii.

⁴ Ibid.

adds: "when this failed him, he returned to the table of the Jesus Christ, begging alms from door to door ".1 Speculum Perfectionis shows us the friars assisting the labourers in the field at harvest time and receiving a portion of the harvest as their wage.2 And there is a passage in the Testament of St. Francis, which indicates that the friars were if possible to earn their bread by their work before having recourse to alms. It runs thus: "When the price of our labour is not given us, let us have recourse to the table of the Lord, begging alms from door to door ". Evidently it is this passage of the Testament that the writer of the Life of Brother Giles had in mind. Finally in the second rule given by the Saint to the friars, he says that "they may receive as the reward of their labour, the things needful for the body both for themselves and their brothers, excepting coin or money ".3 Taking these facts by themselves, it might well seem that the basis of the economic life of the Friars Minor was labour and not mendicancy; that begging was contemplated only as a resource in cases of need. But this is to look at things from a different point of view from that of St. Francis. The saint did indeed regard it as essential to true poverty that men should work for their living. At the same time, he undoubtedly considered the dependence of the beggar upon the generosity of others as the fundamental element in the poverty he loved. planation of this apparent contradiction is not difficult to find: it is written large over the life of the Saint, and reveals the true inwardness of Franciscan poverty. Poverty, as St. Francis understood it, was an entire dependence upon the bounty of God: and he looked for the manifestation of this Divine bounty, partly in the involuntary bounty of Mother Earth, partly in the goodwill of man. To him this dependence was the very corner-stone of his religion and the

¹ Chron. XXIV. Gen., in Anal. Franc. iii. p. 81. Fioretti, Vita, cap. iii. v.; Spec. Perfectionis (ed Sabatier), cap. lv.

² Jacques de Vitry in his now famous letter reprinted in Sabatier's *Spec*. *Perf.* p. 296-301, says that even the women (Poor Clares) worked with their hands.

³ Rule of 1223, cap. v.

first principle of his social economy. It was the special form at once of his faith in God and of his relationship with creatures. God, to him, was the Great Father, the Infinite Love encompassing the creation with watchful solicitude. That was the truth that came to him in the moment of his renunciation, flooding his soul with a happy certitude after long months of spiritual groping in the dark. And in the recognition of this supreme truth came the conviction that the creature's life is fulfilled in a trustful dependence upon the Divine solicitude: for so will the creature be brought into accord with the love of the Creator. As a religious principle therefore absolute poverty—the poverty of the beggar—is man's response to God's solicitude. But the creature whilst it is the recipient of the bounty of God, is also the channel of that bounty: the creation itself is God's providence in action, except when the Divine law is frustrated by the will or sin of man. Hence as on the one hand the Divine solicitude demands our entire trust and dependence, on the other it calls for the fulfilment in ourselves of the act of providence so that in us the Divine bounty be not impeded: and this fulfilment happens when we give to others of our goodwill what it is in us to give them. Then God's providence is fulfilled in us and we are in truth the children of the all bountiful Creator. Wherefore according to their need we must serve our neighbour, sharing with them what we have and that out of our goodwill. Such was the philosophy of St. Francis deduced from his faith.

To labour and to labour in the service of others was therefore a primary element in his conception of the life of poverty. Hence in summing up his own life in his Last Testament he declared: "I worked with my hands and I wish to work always and I wish firmly that all the other brothers should work at some labour which is compatible with honesty: and let those who do not know how to work, learn: not from desire to receive the price of their labour but for example sake and to repel idleness". The concluding sentence deserves notice. Labour and service were of obligation to St. Francis, quite apart from any consideration

of wages. The friars were not to work from a desire of wage: though they might receive such wage if it were offered them. They were to work and serve others as fulfilling in themselves the providence of God, which it is every one's duty to fulfil. Hence without any thought of remuneration, St. Francis nursed the lepers, restored abandoned churches and cleaned dirty ones and carried on his apostolate. If any remuneration was given him he accepted it; if not he went out and begged. But this is to be noticed—whether the bread he ate came as a direct reward of his labour or whether it came to him in the course of begging, it bore in his eyes the same character—it was an alms, that is to say, a free gift of another's goodwill to him in his necessity. For-and here we have another detail essential to a right appreciation of Franciscan poverty-St. Francis would never receive anything but of what he stood in need: since to accept more than one needed he considered a species of robbery, "a defrauding of other poor ".

Strictly speaking, therefore, this social economy of St. Francis consisted essentially in alms-giving and alms-receiving. For his own labour was in the nature of an alms given to the world, whilst in his necessity, he accepted what the In fact, his social economy was the world gave him. apotheosis, not of justice, but of mutual charity. One thing he detested with all his mind and heart and that was the commercial spirit. The story of his dealings with the priest Sylvester, who afterwards became one of his disciples, is typical of his attitude in this matter. In the first days of his renunciation when he was repairing the church of San Damiano, he went begging in the city for stone, and amongst others who gave to him was the priest Sylvester. Some time later when Bernard da Quintavalle had determined to join St. Francis and was distributing his wealth to the poor in the piazza of Santa Maria Maggiore in Assisi, Sylvester came and demanded payment for the stone; if money was going, he thought he had a right to it. St. Francis, who was assisting Bernard, put his hands into the money-bags and offered a heap of gold to Sylvester, saying he could have more if he

Sylvester was shamed, being after all himself wanted it. not ungenerous. Anything in the nature of bargaining for one's due, was repugnant to the feeling and the faith of St. Francis: it was a contradiction of the spirit of Divine Providence, and a practical denial of that free neighbourly charity upon which St. Francis based his whole conception of human society. It is not too much to say that Francis would have rejoiced if counting-houses and all the other paraphernalia of the commercial spirit could have been banished from the Amongst his own disciples he strictly forbade the use of money, because to him it represented that selfish solicitude for the things of the earth which the commercial spirit peculiarly fostered, and which he regarded as the root "Freely give and freely receive" was his accepted law, limited only by those moral considerations which affect the well-being of one's soul: and in this "Freely give and freely receive" we get very near to the soul of Lady Poverty.

Here I must bring my paper to a finish. Inadequate as it is, I trust it has not been without some suggestiveness for the right understanding of Franciscan poverty.

FR. CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C.

1 Leg. Trium Soc. xi. 43.

ST. CLARE.

IF the story of St. Clare has failed to receive the attention it merits from students of the Franciscan Legend the fault certainly does not lie with the subject; for, of all the followers of St. Francis, none appears to have caught his spirit so completely as St. Clare, and in that spirit she threw around the Evangel of Poverty an ineffable charm such as woman alone can impart to religious or civic heroism. After St. Francis himself St. Clare was without doubt the most winsome and wondrous figure in the great religious movement which gathered around the Umbrian Poverello in the far-off thirteenth century. Indeed the life of St. Clare was in its way not less remarkable than that of St. Francis, yet somehow no one really has as clear an idea of St. Clare as they have of St. Francis. Whether the reason is that her personality was over-shadowed by that of St. Francis or that the aloofness of her manner of life tended to obscure it, it is not so easy to determine, but inasmuch as no contemporary chronicler has done for St. Clare what his first companions did for their Seraphic Father, she cannot be made to live, as St. Francis lives in the pages of his biographers; in other words, the extant literary materials for the history of St. Clare are too incomplete. In point of fact the sources of our knowledge as to St. Clare are scanty in proportion as they are plentiful in the case of St. Francis.

To be sure we are far from possessing anything like all the early documents bearing on the life of St. Clare. Not a few of them were destroyed; others have disappeared. There is reason to hope that some of these latter may still be in existence and therefore not absolutely irrecoverable but it is only fair to say that this hope is of the faintest. Moreover,

despite the active search for Franciscan documents which has been so eagerly pursued for some years past, not much fresh data for a more accurate study of the life of St. Clare have been placed at our disposal. Here it may be worth mention that a persistent tradition reaching back to the time of Ubertino da Casale pointed to the monastery of S. Chiara in Assisi as a probable repository of certain early writings bearing on the life of St. Clare which are known to have existed but which have not come down to us. The fact that the original Bull of Innocent IV. confirming the Rule of St. Clare, which seemed to have disappeared for ever, was discovered only a few years ago by the Abbess at S. Chiara hidden inside an old habit of the Saint, served to strengthen the belief that other missing documents might also be lurking in some unsuspected corner of the Assisian monastery. With a view to ascertaining whether or not this was really the case, the present writer obtained special permission from the Holy See to enter the enclosure at S. Chiara and to explore the monastery in quest of any "hidden treasure". But in vain did I seek after any trace of the missing rotuli and cedulæ which Brother Leo is said to have deposited at S. Chiara for safe keeping 1 or of the "many writings" St. Francis addressed to the Clares, or other like documents. To say the truth, I had never altogether shared the hopes cherished by others of finding such documents there, and I was rather led to look for them with the object of settling once for all the still mooted question of their possible existence in the monastery.² This by the way.

Apart from the casual allusions to St. Clare in the contemporary documents concerning St. Francis, the only extant sources of her history properly so-called are (1) a few fragments of the Saint's correspondence,³ (2) a Testament

¹ Ubertino's testimony on this point may be found in his Arbor Vitæ Crucifixi 7esu (Venice, 1485), lib. v. c. 5.

²Those whom the subject interests will find a detailed description of the MSS. now at S. Chiara in my inventory of the archives there published in the Arch. Fran. Hist. i. 413-432.

³ Printed in Acta Sanctorum, Martii i. pp. 505-507: transl. by Mrs. Balfour in The Life and Legend of the Lady St. Clare (Longmans, 1910).

ascribed to her,1 (3) some early bulls bearing on her life,2 and (4) an anonymous legend or life written about the time of her canonization.3 Taken as a whole these documents do not yield sufficient material for a full-length portrait of St. Clare. While her four charming letters to the Princess Agnes of Bohemia bear the impress of St. Clare's personality and witness incidentally to the observances at S. Damiano and to the spread of the Poor Ladies, there is nothing or next to nothing in them which throws any light upon the Saint's own life. There are, it is true, reminiscent references to her conversion, her vocation, and to the foundation of her Order in the Testament which St. Clare, in imitation of St. Francis, is said to have composed during her last illness, but then the authenticity of this document has unfortunately been called in question owing to the obscurity surrounding the origin of the text we possess, and it must, therefore, be quoted with some reserve.4 Among the papal documents bearing on St. Clare's life the Bull Solet Annuere (9 Aug., 1253) confirming the definitive Rule of St. Clare and the Bull of her canonization (II Aug., 1255) are the most important so far as concerns our present purpose. It is no easy task to thread one's way through the other Bulls touching St. Clare that are scattered through the first two volumes of the Franciscan Bullary and it takes a patient spirit of research to disentangle the complicated early history of her Order which these documents unfold. The groundwork of our knowledge of St. Clare is derived from her contemporary Legend which remains the chief source of her history. This work, which is now generally ascribed to Thomas of Celano, was written primarily

¹ Printed in Seraphicae Legislationis Textus Originales (Quaracchi, 1897) 223-229: transl. in O'Connor's translation of Père de Chérancé's Vie de S. Claire: St. Clare of Assisi, pp. 273-280 (Washbourne, 1910).

² Bullarium Franciscanum, vols. i. and ii. passim.

³Legenda S. Clarae Virginis, ed. by Prof. Penacchi, Assisi, 1910 (Società Internazionale di Studi Franciscani). The Life of Saint Clare, translated and edited by Fr. Paschal Robinson (Dolphin Press, 1910 and Fisher Unwin).

⁴ For a discussion of the questions connected with the authenticity of this document readers are referred to an article on "The Writings of St. Clare" by the present writer in the *Archiv. Francis. Hist.* iii. 433-447.

for the greater glory of the Saint and for the edification of her spiritual daughters and of the world at large. This being the case, whatever might tend to establish and exalt the sanctity of St. Clare—her watchings and fastings, her spirit of prayer and gift of tears, her ecstasies and miracles—is set forth at length. On the other hand, the purely historical features of the Saint's life, which in our day have come to be regarded as essential for a complete grasp of the subject, are in a great measure disregarded. For example, so far as dates go, only one—the year of St. Clare's canonization—is given throughout the entire work. We are, therefore, at a distinct disadvantage in dealing with her history.

While it is easy enough with the materials at hand to draw an outline of the life of St. Clare, it is extremely difficult to deduce a detailed and connected narrative from them. The further fact that it is not always easy to make these materials say what they mean has probably been another reason why biographers have shirked the subject and why, notwithstanding the present widespread interest in early Franciscan history, so little, comparatively speaking, has been written of late years about the life of St. Clare and the beginnings of her Order. In spite of these drawbacks there is much to be said concerning St. Clare that is of interest. Here, however, we may do no more than merely suggest the subject by passing rapidly in review the better-known facts in the life of St. Clare with a view to recalling something of the personality which baffled so many persons in the days of her flesh, and which still, seven centuries later, remains almost as elusive as it is engaging.

Let it be said at the outset that we know hardly anything of St. Clare's family. Tradition tells us that her father's name was Favorino Scifi or Scefi and that he possessed a feudal castle called Sasso Rosso, a few stones of which still may be seen on one of the southern slopes of Mount Subasio. Unfortunately for this tradition, the unsentimental critics of our day will have nothing to do with it, but it may be very close to history for all that.

However, the elaborate pedigree of St. Clare, which certain biographers of the saint have fused together and set down as unquestioned fact, rests on somewhat insecure assumption, to say the least. In point of fact all that is known concerning the ancestry of St. Clare scarcely suffices to do more than arouse a vain curiosity. Again, not one of the early sources gives us the year of St. Clare's birth. So far as can be gathered, however, she was born at Assisi in the summer of 1194 and was therefore some twelve years younger than St. Francis. Save for a few fragments of pious legend, we are without any exact knowledge of the life of St. Clare down to 1212. It was during the Lent of that year that St. Francis of Assisi, then in the first fervour of his marvellous mission, appeared before his fellow-townsmen as the "Herald of the Great King". We know that St. Clare was in the eager throng that flocked to hear St. Francis and that his words of "spirit and life" disengaged her heart yet more from the things of flesh and time. Already in her father's house she had given herself to prayer and under her finest clothes a hair shirt fretted her tender skin. Now she felt the strong wind of the Spirit, and, yielding to its influence, she secretly sought out St. Francis and told him how she too yearned to live after the manner of the Holy Gospel.

In the words of the Legend, "Francis visited Clare and she more often visited him, so ordering the times of their visits that their holy meetings might neither become known by man nor disparaged by public rumour. For, accompanied by a single confidential companion, the girl, going forth from her paternal home in secret, frequently visited the man of God: to her his words seemed a flame and his deeds more than human." If we may believe Bartholomew of Pisa, St. Francis made her dress in sackcloth and beg alms in the streets of Assisi. Be this as it may—and it is just such a test as St. Francis may have set—we find that St. Clare attended high mass at the Cathedral of S. Rufino on Palm Sunday arrayed in her fête-day finery. That was the last time the world was to see her. The same night she left her

¹ Liber de Conformitate, Quaracchi Edition, i. p. 352.

home by stealth, and having forced her way through a walledup door-perhaps a "porta di mortuccio" of the sort still to be seen in Assisi-hurried out of the slumbering town and down the hillside. As she approached the little wayside chapel of the Porziuncola in the plain below Assisi, St. Francis and his companions advanced to meet her with lighted torches, and there before our Lady's altar, St. Francis cut off her hair and clothed her with the rough Franciscan habit. the stillness of the night, a holy joy compensating for any lack of solemnity, was the young girl consecrated to God and to Holy Poverty. This was on March 18-19, 1212. St. Clare was not yet eighteen years old at the time of this mysterious travail of the soul which is called her "conversion" and which was destined to bring into being the Second Franciscan Order, as it is called, of the Poor Ladies or Clares. And still in Assisi a small arched doorway hard by the Piazza S. Chiara is pointed out as the one through which Clare took her midnight flight to an unknown future. Below in the plain the little chapel of the Porziuncola is standing, as all the world knows, no longer in the open however as it was in St. Clare's day, but beneath the dome of the great Basilica of S. Maria degli Angeli, erected in later times as a protecting enclosure.

Straightway after her clothing at this little sanctuary St. Clare, as we learn from her contemporary biographer, was taken by St. Francis to S. Paolo, a Benedictine nunnery about one hour's walk further on in the plain, and was placed there for the nonce. This monastery no longer exists. It stood on the outskirts of Bastia near the river Chiagio, and occupied the site of the present Campo Santo or burial place of the town. The old chapel of St. Clare's time has survived, but the restorations it underwent after partial destruction by earthquake have sadly deformed the dingy edifice which is now used as a mortuary chapel. This, then, was the scene of St. Clare's single-handed struggle against her relatives who sought to persuade her to return home. It was, as we know, a vain attempt; unmoved by blandishment and heedless of affront the frail girl held to her purpose with a firmness above

her years. Clinging to the altar cloths when they sought to drag her away, and baring her tonsured head, she declared that "nothing would henceforth separate her from the service of Christ"—an inspiring scene which invests what remains of S. Paolo with a wistful interest it would otherwise not possess.

After a few days' sojourn at S. Paolo, St. Clare was placed provisionally by St. Francis at S. Angelo in Panzo, another Benedictine monastery situated, as is now clear, on the western declivity of Subasio, nearly midway between the path leading up to the Carceri from the Porta Cappucini and the old road to Spello. This monastery also disappeared long ago but part of the former gateway and some traces of the cloister are yet discernible in the group of farm buildings which mark the place where it once stood. It was here that St. Clare, some sixteen days after her own "conversion," was joined by her younger sister St. Agnes-whose flight only drew on them both a fresh persecution. By this time her kinsmen "despaired of Clare," as the contemporary Legend puts it, but they made a brutal attempt to carry off Agnes by main force. "One of the knights in an outburst of anger rushed upon her and, sparing neither blows nor kicks, attempted to drag her away by the hair, while the others pressed forward and lifted her up in their arms." Thanks, however, to the intervention of St. Clare this attempt was frustrated, and Agnes was finally suffered to remain with her sister. Before long St. Francis established them in a rude dwelling adjoining the chapel of S. Damiano which he had rebuilt with his own hands and which was now given to him as a permanent abode for his spiritual daughters. In a short time St. Clare was followed there by a number of companions, and in 1215, much against her will, St. Francis made her Abbess 1 of the community which she continued to

¹ The powers of the Abbess were limited, not absolute, as may be seen from the following extracts from the Rule of St. Clare. Cap. ii.: "If any one, moved by divine inspiration should come to us wishing to embrace this life, the Abbess is bound to ask the consent of all the sisters, and if the greater part give their consent, she may receive her, having obtained leave of our Lord Cardinal Pro-

govern until her death nearly four decades later. S. Damiano, which was situated on a slope below Assisi about a quarter of a mile from the present Porta Nuova, thus became the central spot in the life of St. Clare and the cradle of her Order. She made of it a very school of saints. Although it is not easy to conceive precisely the original appearance of the place, yet the general lie of the old gray building now nestling there among the tangled olive trees must give the visitor a very fair idea of what S. Damiano was in the days of St. Clare, while within the choir, refectory, dormitory and infirmary, despite some later alterations and modifications, still retain their primitive form, or at least are not far removed from it.

For some years after her installation at S. Damiano we catch but a few passing glimpses of S. Clare. We see her in the idyl of the *Fioretti* (cap. xv.) which tells how she ate with St. Francis and with his companions at the Porziuncola, a charming chapter which if not altogether true to the letter is assuredly true to the spirit. Indeed the whole narrative is so redolent of the true *Umbria Mystica* that no apology need be made for quoting it in part, even though most readers know it already:

"When St. Francis was staying at Assisi, he went several times to visit St. Clare, and to give her holy instructions. She had a very great desire to eat with him for once, and prayed him for this many times, but he would not

tector". Cap. iv.: "In the election of the Abbess the sisters are obliged to observe the canonical form. . . . If at any time it shall seem to all the sisters that the Abbess does not suffice for their service and their common good, the sisters are bound, as soon as they can, to elect another Abbess and Mother for themselves. . . . The Abbess should there [in the weekly Chapter] confer with all her sisters as to those things that have to do with the welfare of the monastery, for the Lord often reveals to the least that which is best. . . . In order to preserve the bond of mutual love and peace, all the officials of the monastery shall be elected by the common consent of all the sisters. And in like manner at least eight sisters shall be elected among the more prudent, of whom the Abbess is bound always to take counsel as to those things which our form of life requires. Moreover, the sisters may, and they ought sometimes, if it shall be useful and expedient to them, to remove the officials and the discreets and to elect others in their place."

consent to give her this consolation. When his companions had heard of the desire of St. Clare, they said to St. Francis: 'Father, this stiffness, to us, seems not according to Divine charity, seeing Sister Clare is a virgin, which is a thing holy and well-pleasing to God-namely, that thou shouldst refuse her in such a little matter as eating with thee; and especially considering that, at thy preaching, she abandoned the riches and pomps of the world. And to say the truth, if she asked thee a greater favour than this is, thou oughtest to do it for this flower of thy spiritual planting.' Then St. Francis answered: 'Does it seem to you that I ought to consent?' and his companions replied: 'Father, yes, a right thing it is that thou shouldst grant her this favour and consolation.' Then said St. Francis: 'Since it seems so to you, it seems so to me also; but that she may be more consoled, I will have her eat with me at St. Mary of the Angels, because she has been so long a time secluded at S. Damiano, that it will give her joy to see the place of the Blessed Mary, where she was made the spouse of Jesus Christ; and there we shall eat together in the name of God.' The day appointed therefore having come, St. Clare, with one companion, came out of her Monastery, and accompanied by the companions of St. Francis, went to St. Mary of the Angels, and saluted devoutly before her altar the Holy Virgin Mary, in the place where her hair had been cut off, and where she had received the veil. Then they led her into the house, until it should be the hour to dine. And meanwhile, St. Francis had the dinner table prepared on the bare ground, as was his custom, and the hour for dinner being come, they seated themselves together, St. Francis and St. Clare, and one of the companions of St. Francis with the companion of St. Clare, and then all the other companions, humbly seating themselves round the table. And at the first dish, St. Francis began to talk of God in a style so sweet, so admirable and so sublime, that there descended upon them the abundance of Divine grace, and they were all rapt in God."

Again we find St. Clare acting as counsellor to St. Fran-

cis and urging him to continue his mission to the people at a time when he seemed to think his vocation lay rather in a life of contemplation.1 That St. Francis turned to St. Clare more than once when in doubt and discouragement, and that her gentle influence went far towards fashioning his life and forwarding his work there is little question. She appears to have been one of the few to whom St. Francis spoke of the stigmata, and if the testimony adduced by Bartholi is to be relied on, she learned the history of the Porziuncola Indulgence from St. Francis himself.2 What is more, there runs through the friendship of the two Saints from first to last something of the chaste charm of mediæval romance. When in an access of blindness and mental suffering St. Francis visited S. Damiano for the last time, St. Clare made for him a little hut of reeds in the garden, and it was there that he composed his sublime improvisation known as the "Canticle of the Sun".3 The next St. Clare saw of St. Francis was when the funeral procession accompanying his remains from the Porziuncola to Assisi halted at S. Diamano that the sisters there might kiss the pierced hands and feet of the dead saint—a touching scene eloquently described by Thomas of Celano 4 and commemorated in one of the finest, albeit least accurate, frescoes in the Upper Church of San Francesco.

After St. Francis was gone the figure of St. Clare begins to stand out with greater definiteness as the truest heir of his inmost spirit. So far as she was concerned, St. Francis was always living, and nothing perhaps is more admirable than the constancy with which St. Clare cherished his memory through the long years she survived him. In the dissensions among the friars after St. Francis's death, St. Clare sided wholly with his faithful followers who opposed any mitigation in the Rule, and the undaunted courage with which she struggled to uphold St. Francis's ideal of poverty in all its pristine purity is full of beauty and pathetic

¹ As to this we have the authority of St. Bonaventure, Legenda Major (ed. Quaracchi), c. xii. sect. 2, as well as that of the Fioretti.

² Tractatus de Indulgentia S. Mariae de Portiuncula (ed. Sabatier), p. 96.

³ See Spec. Perf. (ed. Sabatier), p. xxxv. ⁴ 1 Cel. ii. 10.

interest.1 That struggle had begun, as we know, while St. Francis was absent in the Orient, 1219-1220. It was then that Cardinal Ugolino, afterwards Gregory IX., drew up a written Rule for the Clares based on that of St. Benedict, which in effect, if not in intention, took away from the Damianites the characteristic of absolute poverty which St. Francis sought to make the distinctive mark of his Order. St. Clare firmly and successfully resisted the innovations proposed by Ugolino, and there is no good reason to believe that this quasi-Benedictine Rule was ever observed at S. Damiano. Certain it is that when Ugolino (who had meanwhile ascended the Papal throne as Gregory IX.) came to Assisi for the canonization of St. Francis, he visited S. Damiano and pressed St. Clare to deviate so far from the practice of absolute poverty which had hitherto obtained there as to make some provision for the unforeseen wants of the community during the bad times which had fallen upon Italy. But St. Clare was unyielding. "If it be thy vow that hinders thee," said the Pope, "we absolve thee from it." "Holy Father," was the reply, "absolve from my sins if thou wilt, but I desire not to be absolved from following Jesus Christ." The lofty firmness with which St. Clare stood her ground won over the Pope and on September 17, 1228, he granted her the Bull known as the "Privilegium Paupertatis," by virtue of which she might never be constrained by anyone to receive possessions for her Order. This small and crumpled piece of parchment has survived the vicissitudes

¹ The ideals and practice of St. Clare as regards poverty were so far removed from those of Elias that it is not easy to understand the terms in which she refers to the ambitious and inscrutable Minister General: "Run in that [way of] perfection to which the spirit of God has called you," she writes to Princess Agnes of Bohemia, "so that in it you may fulfil your vows to the Most High and more surely walk the way of God's commandments. And follow the counsels of our Reverend Father Brother Elias, Minister General of the Whole Order, and put them before all other counsels given you to follow and value them as more precious than any other gift." The text of this letter is given in the Acta SS. 1.c. p. 507. It seems to have been written about 1235. See Lempp, Frère Elie de Cortone, pp. 108-9. Elias appears to have retained the confidence of St. Agnes of Assisi also: "I beg you," she writes to her sister St. Clare, "to ask Brother Elias to visit me oftener and to console me in the Lord". See Chron. xxiv. Gen. in Anal. Francis. iii. 181.

of well nigh seven centuries and, in its way, it is the most precious heirloom the monastery of S. Chiara at Assisi now has to show.

Nor was this the only occasion on which we find Pope Gregory yielding to St. Clare. It would seem from a letter of Jacques de Vitry written in 12161 that at the outset the Clares lived by manual labour and did not accept alms. definite enclosure was imposed upon them in 1219 or about that year, their needs were supplied by certain friars who came to be known as Zealots of the Poor Ladies—a father to attend to the spiritual needs of the community and one or more lay brothers whose duty it was to go in quest of food for the sisters.2 St. Clare was most desirous that this arrangement might be continued after her death, as is clear from a passage in the last chapter of her Rule in which, after telling of St. Francis's solicitude for herself and her sisters at the outset of their religious life, she pleads "for the love of God and the Blessed Francis" that the services of a chaplain with one companion and two lay brothers may always be granted to the sisters "to assist them in their poverty".3 We learn,

¹ See Boehmer, Anal. zur Gesch. des Franz von Assisi, p. 94.

² It may perhaps be worth mention that this custom still prevails in some monasteries of the Clares in Italy, among them being S. Lucia at Foligno and the SS. Trinità at Gubbio.

³ See also the sixth chapter of the Rule: "After the Heavenly Father Most High deigned to enlighten my heart by His grace to do penance according to the example and teaching of our most blessed Father, St. Francis, I together with my sisters voluntarily promised him obedience a little while after his con-Seeing that we feared no poverty, toil, sorrow, humiliation or contempt from the world, nay, rather that we held them in great delight, the Blessed Father wrote us a form of life as follows: 'Since by divine inspiration you have made yourselves daughters and handmaids of the most High Sovereign King, the Heavenly Father, and have espoused yourselves to the Holy Ghost, electing to live according to the perfection of the holy Gospel, I will and I promise for myself and my friars always to have for you as for them a special solicitude'." This promise he faithfully kept so long as he lived and he wished it always to be kept by the friars. St. Clare's anxiety is explained by the fact that a movement in favour of repudiating all responsibility for the sisters was already gaining ground among the friars—a movement which culminated under St. Bonaventure in the decree of the General Chapter of 1263 ut omnino dimitteretur cura sanctimonialium Damianitarum sive Clarissarum. remarked that a similar movement was going on in the Dominican Order.)

moreover, from her contemporary biographer that St. Clare took special delight in the visits of the early companions of St. Francis who often came to S. Damiano to preach to the sisters. It was, therefore, a sad blow to her when Gregory IX. forbade any of the friars to visit the Clares without his permission. "He might as well take all the friars from us," she exclaimed, "now that he hath taken those who furnished us with the food of the soul," and she forthwith sent away even the brother questors who provided bodily sustenance for her community. When the Pope heard this he at once retracted his prohibition and gave back to the Damianites the preachers so dear to them. How completely St. Clare had won the admiration of Gregory two of his letters to her still extant bear eloquent witness.

After the death of Pope Gregory, however, St. Clare had to contend anew to retain the treasure of poverty she had taken for her portion from the first. Indeed, it was only two days before her death and after years of undiscouraged striving that she obtained the definitive approval of her Rule by which the "Most High Poverty" so dear to St. Francis was transmitted intact to those who came after her. And if in the end St. Clare was more successful in attaining her ideal than the Poverello himself, it was largely because she had the stronger will of the two. Not without reason, then, has she been likened to the strong woman eulogized by the Hebrew seer. Strength was indeed the chief characteristic of the saintly abbess, and the resoluteness and endurance with which she withstood all attempts to impose a less rigorous Rule upon her community, is the more striking when one remembers that all the while St. Clare was broken in health

¹ It is interesting to recall in this connection that Brother Giles, whom St. Francis called the "Knight of his Round Table," once visited S. Damiano while an English friar, a renowned master of theology, was preaching there. "Stop master," said Giles, "for I want to preach." The preacher yielded, and after Giles had finished speaking was suffered to resume his discourse "to the edification of St. Clare". See *Anal. Francis.* t. iii. p. 81 and "The Golden Sayings of Blessed Giles" (tr. Robinson), p. 28.

² The text of these letters is given by Wadding, Annales, ad. an. 1221 n. xx and 1251 n. xvii.

and well nigh bed-ridden. Bodily suffering, however, was powerless to crush her splendid spirit. Nor were her infirmities any motive with St. Clare to abate her fasts, watchings, disciplines, and other austerities. She allowed her body no condescension but what necessity made indispensable. deed she seemed to support the weakness of her body with the vigour of her soul. This interior strength St. Clare may be said to have maintained by her almost unbroken union with God in prayer. Hence she appeared strongest and most courageous when she was unprovided of human help. ness the well-known incident of the repulse of the Saracens. "Bands of soldiers and of Saracen archers, numerous as bees, were stationed by the imperial command to lay waste fortified castles and to besiege cities. And when at one time their hostile fury was directed against Assisi, the special city of God, and the army was already close to the gates, the Saracens, that worst of races who thirst for the blood of Christians and most shamelessly attempt every wickedness, rushed into the cloister of the virgins. The hearts of the ladies sank within them from fear, their voices trembled with terror, and they went in tears to the mother. Although she was ill, Clare with a stout heart directed that she be led to the door and placed before the enemy, a silver casket enclosed in ivory, in which the Body of the Holy of Holies was most devoutly kept, preceding her. And as she wholly prostrated herself before the Lord in prayer she said to her Christ amid tears: 'Doth it please Thee, my Lord, to deliver Thy defenceless hand-maids, whom I have nourished with Thy love, into the hands of the pagans? Defend, O Lord, I beseech Thee, these Thy servants whom I in this hour am unable to defend.' Presently He sent her of His special grace a voice as if of a little child which sounded in her ears: 'I will always defend thee'. 'My Lord,' she said, 'and if it please Thee, protect the city, for it supporteth us for love of Thee.' And the Lord answered: 'It will be troubled, but it shall be defended by My protection'. Then the virgin, raising her tearful face, comforted the weeping saying: 'Rest assured, I bid you, little daughters, that ye

shall suffer no harm; only trust in Christ'. Nor had an instant elapsed before the boldness of these dogs being changed into fear, they quickly descended the walls they had scaled, being overthrown by the power of her prayers." 1

It is with reference to this dramatic scene that St. Clare is usually depicted in art as holding a pyx. However, it may be worthy of note that in the earliest pictures of the saint she is shown with another emblem—the lily—and, in point of fact, it is a popular exaggeration to suppose that St. Clare carried the Blessed Sacrament herself on the occasion when her prayers routed the troops of Frederick II.

In St. Clare's conduct on that occasion, only a partial view of her is obtained. Other glimpses of her which carry us further into the inner life at S. Damiano go to show that she could be gentle as well as strong and considerate in her womanliness as she was heroic in her steadfastness. For the silent brooding nun who might be seen going through the dormitory of S. Damiano when the nights were cold and putting warmer covering over those sisters who seemed to be ill-protected against the rigours of winter was none other than the abbess herself, whose personal courage had saved the monastery as it had saved her Rule. This tenderer side of St. Clare's character is no less charmingly revealed in her letters to the Blessed Agnes of Bohemia. "The half of my soul and most special sanctuary of my heart's love," is the way St. Clare addresses this pious Princess, who had been affianced to Frederick II., but who on hearing the story of St. Clare, declined to marry the Emperor and founded a monastery of the Poor Ladies in Prague, being the first of a long line of royal women to join the Order. "Marvel not that I have not written to thee so often as thou and my own soul could desire," says Clare in one letter, "and think not within thyself that the great love with which I burn has any whit become less. For I love thee even as thy mother's heart did This only hath hindered me, the scarcity of love thee. messengers and the great dangers of the road." In another missive the Saint takes Agnes to task for her excessive fast-

¹ Legenda St. Claræ, ed. Pennacchi, pp. 30-31.

ing. "Since our body is not of brass," she writes, "nor our strength like stone, but we are weak and subject to bodily infirmities, I earnestly beseech thee in Our Lord to refrain from the great rigour of abstinence which I know thou followest, so that while thou livest and hopest in Our Lord thou mayest give to Him a service full of reason and that thy sacrifice may be seasoned with the salt of prudence." The few fragments that remain to us of St. Clare's correspondence bear witness to the readiness with which she wrote and possess an interest above the purely historical—the interest called human. For St. Clare though a great Saint, perhaps the greatest woman Saint of whom we have authentic information, was very human and, for the rest, quite unlike the languid lifeless figure which modern painting mostly gives us as her likeness. In particular, St. Clare's gift of sympathy, a gift so exquisitely emphasized in her dealings with her spiritual children, was the key to the empire she exercised over the hearts of all. "They loved her as a mother with tender affection"; says the Legend; "they revered her as a teacher by reason of her office; they followed her as their guide in the path of perfection and they admired her as the spouse of God endowed with every prerogative of holiness."

It was only natural that the halo of popular veneration that had surrounded St. Clare from the first should become more apparent as her life drew to a close. Brave and laborious to the last, she had herself propped up in bed so that she might still spin fine linen for corporals which she had distributed through all the poor churches in the Umbrian plain. For like St. Francis, St. Clare had nothing more at heart than all that concerned the *cultus* of the Blessed Sacrament and her devotion to the mystery of the Holy Eucharist was only second to that of the *Poverello* himself. Two days before her death St. Clare received the Holy Communion for the last time. The same day Pope Innocent IV. came to visit her. "Praise the Lord, my little daughters," she said to her grief-stricken nuns, "that on this day I have merited to receive the Most High Himself and to behold His

Vicar." The Pope was at pains to hurry the Bull approving the Rule of her Order to the dying Saint. It is dated from Perugia, August 9, 1253. Until quite lately it has been customary to look on the Rule contained in this Bull as the handiwork of St. Francis, but recent research has made it certain that he had no part whatever in its composition. Aside from a short formula vitæ that he gave to St. Clare and her first companions at S. Damiano in or about the year 1212, St. Francis drew up no Rule of any kind for the nuns there. That these Damianites were still without any formal or written Rule when the Camaldolese nuns of Vallegloria, near Spello, embraced their mode of life several years later is clear from documents still extant in the monastery at Vallegloria. The observances which had gradually grown up at S. Damiano round about the primitive formula vita, together with the instructions received from the Holy See at different times, seem to have formed the basis of the definitive Rule of St. Clare which was cast into a legislative form by Cardinal Rainaldo of Segni, afterwards Alexander IV., and formally confirmed by Innocent IV. on the very eve of St. Clare's death, as has just been said. No one who carefully examines this Rule can doubt that St. Clare herself had a large share in its compilation. Her hand is noticeable more especially in certain passages where the impersonal style of the legislator is dropped, as, for example, where she refers to herself as "the little flower of the most blessed Father Francis," or where she says at the end of Chapter II.: "And for the love of the most holy and most sweet Child Jesus wrapped in poor little swaddling clothes and laid in a manger and of His most Holy Mother, I admonish, beseech and entreat my Sisters that they be always clothed in poor garments". Moreover, it is surely to St. Clare herself that we owe the incorporation in the sixth chapter of this Rule of the formula vitæ which St. Francis gave her when she was installed at S. Damiano, as well as of the ultima voluntas he wrote for his spiritual daughters there, and, if these precious fragments of the Poverello's writings have been preserved to us through the broken ways of Franciscan history, it is doubtless due to their insertion here. The original of the Bull of Innocent IV. confirming the Rule which was recovered a few years ago at St. Chiara in Assisi under circumstances already mentioned has a touching inscription on the margin in a contemporary hand to the effect that St. Clare had kissed it "many, many times out of devotion" before she expired.

During her last illness St. Clare found much solace in the presence of her sister St. Agnes, who had come from the Florentine Monastery at Monticello to be with her, as well as in the presence of Leo, Angelo, and Juniper, "the renowned jester of the Lord," three of the favourite early companions of St. Francis. When she felt that death was near, she asked that they would read aloud to her the Passion according to St. John in commendationem animæ even as they had done seven and twenty years before when St. Francis lay dying at the Porziuncola. "Go forth without fear," she then said to her soul, "for thou hast a good guide for thy journey," and that limpid flame-like soul which had long burned with so white a light soared heavenward in a very transport of divine love. It was very early on the morning of Aug. 11, 1253.

Needless to say the nuns at S. Damiano wished to retain the body of such a mother among them, but the magistrates of Assisi took prompt measures to secure for that town the mortal remains of the Saint whose prayers, as all believed, had on two occasions saved Assisi from being taken and pillaged by the Saracens. It was not safe, they urged, to leave her body in a lonely spot outside the walls like S. Damiano; besides it was only meet that she who had been the "chief rival of the Blessed Francis in the observance of gospel perfection" should also have a church in Assisi built in her honour. These counsels prevailed, and St. Clare's body was borne to Assisi in a triumphal procession headed by the Pope and his Curia and was placed provisionally in the chapel of S. Giorgio where the preaching of St. Francis had first touched her young heart and where his own dead body had temporarily reposed until its translation to S. Francesco in 1228. The small chapel in which the

remains of St. Clare were thus laid now stands within the cloister of the monastery of S. Chiara, half hidden beneath a heavy eighteenth-century portico. St. Clare was formally canonized on the second anniversary of her death and some five years later, on the 3rd October, 1260, her remains were buried with great pomp deep down under the high altar of the new basilica erected to receive them. After it had remained hidden for well nigh six centuries like that of St. Francis and after much search had been made, St. Clare's coffin was found in 1850 to the great joy of the Assisians, and we are told that when it was opened the wild thyme with which her nuns had besprinkled the Saint's body six centuries before still exhaled a sweet fragrance. this may be, something of the vernal fragrance which St. Bonaventure tells us surrounded her in life still clings to the story of St. Clare, linked as it is so closely with all that is loveliest in mediæval mysticism. It is truly one of those lives that teach perfection without sacrificing poetry. "The little flower of St. Francis," is what St. Clare used to call herself and in that name her whole biography is given.

FR. PASCHAL ROBINSON, O.F.M.

JOACHIM OF FLORA AND THE EVER-LASTING GOSPEL.¹

In the year 1202, when Frederick II. was a child of eight at Palermo, under the guardianship of Innocent III., and the future St. Francis was a youth of twenty, leading the bands of gay singers and merrymakers at Assisi, there died among the mountains of Calabria one who was to bear a symbolical relation to their age. Joachim of Flora is both reactionary and pioneer; in revolt not only against what was corrupt, but also against much that was in reality of spiritual and intellectual value in the twelfth century, he at the same time anticipates the most significant religious movement of the thirteenth. The precursor of the religious revival wrought by St. Francis, he was destined no less to be the name of contention that almost worked its undoing.

The materials for reconstructing the life of this extraordinary man, whose memory for two centuries was a source of inspiration to an ever-dwindling band who looked for a fresh and sudden revelation of the divine purpose in history to illumine the darkness of the times, are exceedingly scanty. We have, in the first place, a precious biographical fragment, the so-called *Virtutum beati Joachimi synopsis*, by the Archbishop Luke of Cosenza, who in his youth had been one of Joachim's secretaries; it is only a fragment, but gives an extraordinarily vivid picture of the man's personality and how he impressed his contemporaries.² Next, there come a very few documents, chief among which is Joachim's own

¹ This paper is based on an address given at a meeting of the Society on the 2nd of November, 1910.

² Virtutum B. Joachimi synopsis, per Lucam Archiepiscopum Cosentinum, ipsius Beati olim scribam familiarem, in Ughelli, Italia Sacra, IX. (Venice, 1721), coll. 205-208; and Acta Sanctorum, May, tom. VII. (ed. 1866, pp. 91-92), under May 29.

encyclical letter of the year 1200, and the still fewer vague hints in his writings. Lastly, there is the formal biography by Jacobus Graecus Syllanaeus, a monk of the abbey of Flora in the seventeenth century, which purports to be based upon an earlier work then existing in the archives of the abbey, but which has, in many respects, to be accepted with considerable caution and reserve.¹

Joachim was born at Celico, near Cosenza, about 1132, the son of a notary, Maurus of Celico (whose family name is said to have been Tabellione), who held some office at the court of the Norman kings of Sicily. His father placed him at court, and he apparently anticipated a high worldly career. In 1158, peace having been recently established between the King of Sicily, William the Bad, and the Eastern Emperor, Manuel Comnenus, Joachim went to Constantinople, possibly on a political mission, with a train of friends and retainers. He was clearly not one of the nobles of the kingdom, and, in this pompous journey, there is a certain suggestion of Manzoni's Fra Cristoforo before his conversion. At Constantinople, he witnessed some great calamity, probably an outbreak of pestilence; converted from the world, he threw off his rich robes, dismissed his retainers, and, with a single companion, went as a pilgrim to the Holy Land. He passed all Lent in contemplation on Mount Tabor, and, in the night before Easter day, claims to have had a revelation concerning the inner meaning of the Scriptures:—

"To me, Joachim, about the midst of the silent course of the night, and at the hour in which our Lion of the Tribe of Judah is believed to have risen from the dead, as I meditated, a brightness of understanding suddenly shone upon the eyes of my mind, and a revelation was made concerning the whole agreement of the old and new testaments that I had perceived".2

Returning to Italy, he seems first to have retired to the

¹ Joacchim Abbatis et Florensis Ordinis chronologia, fratre Jacobo cognomine Graeco Syllanaeo authore, Cosenza, 1612. The biographical portions are reprinted in Acta Sanctorum, vol. cit., pp. 92 et seq. Cf. Tocco, L'Eresia nel medio evo, Florence, 1884, pp. 261-291.

² Concordia novi ac veteris Testamenti, prefatio.

Cistercian abbey of Sambucina, and then to have anticipated the work of St. Francis, going about without any ecclesiastical orders and independent of any established congregations, preaching to the people. The Church authorities at length interfered; upon which he took the Cistercian habit in the abbey of Corazzo, and was ordained priest (probably in 1168), after which he preached more seldom, and applied himself entirely to biblical study in the light of the illumination he had received on Mount Tabor. Greatly against his will, he was elected abbot; but in 1182 (the year of the birth of St. Francis), finding the duties of his office an intolerable hindrance to what he deemed his higher calling, he appealed in personito Pope Lucius III., who relieved him of the temporal cares of the abbey, and warmly approved of his continuing his work in whatever Cistercian house he pleased. In the following year, 1183, we find him in the monastery of Casamari, an honoured guest of the abbot, and it was there that Luke of Cosenza, then a young monk of the house, first saw him. "I marvelled," he writes, "that a man of such reputation, so efficacious in his speech, should be wearing such old and debased clothes, which seemed partly burned away at the edges; but I learned afterwards that, all through his life, he cared nothing for the vileness of his dress." "He remained," he says, "in Casamari for about a year and a half, diligently dictating and emending simultaneously his Exposition of the Apocalypse and his book of the Concord of the Old and New Testament. There, in that time, he began the book of the Psaltery of Ten Strings." Joachim himself tells us of the circumstances under which the last work was begun. Praying before the altar of the monastery chapel on Whitsunday, he was assailed by an overwhelming difficulty concerning the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity; but, when he invoked the aid of the Holy Ghost, the mystery was revealed to him in the form which he at once began to set down in the book.1 Luke, who had been acting as his abbot's notary, now became Joachim's secretary instead. Night and day, he tells us, he would sit at his feet, taking down his words,

¹ Psalterium decem chordarum, prefatio.

together with two other monks. He served his Mass, and watched his wonderful devotion, the seer's sallow face all glowing with angelical fervour at the elevation of the Host, and tears running down his cheeks when the Passion was read. At times Joachim preached to the monks in the chapter, "and then, when we looked upon his countenance, it was as though an Angel were presiding over us"; and Luke saw him sometimes kneeling in ecstasy, with hands and eyes upraised to heaven, as though he saw Christ face to face and was speaking with Him.

Notwithstanding the honours paid him in the Cistercian order and the favour of Pope Lucius, Joachim's outspoken denunciations of the laxity of monastic and ecclesiastical life had begun to excite opposition. In 1185, he was either summoned or went of his own accord to Verona to see Urban III., who confirmed the papal approbation; which was repeated, more conditionally, by Clement III. in 1187—the latter implying that he has only Joachim's word for the approval of his predecessors, and exhorting him to make no delay in completing and emending his work, and submitting it to the judgment of the Holy See. Shortly afterwards, he seems to have been in Sicily, at the end of 1190 or beginning of 1191, summoned to Messina by King Richard of England, who desired to discourse with him concerning Antichrist and the mysteries of the future.²

The relations between Joachim and the Cistercians now became strained. In the *statuta* of the chapter of the order held in 1192, we read that letters are to be sent out by the General Chapter, summoning Joachim formerly abbot and the monk Raynerius to appear: "But if they contumaciously fail to come before the feast of St. John the Baptist, let all the abbots and brethren of our order shun them as fugitives".

¹ Vincent of Beauvais, Speculum Historiale, xxix. 40.

² Roger of Hoveden, *Chronica*, ed. Stubbs, III. pp. 75-79; Benedict of Peterborough, *Gesta Regis Ricardi*, ed. Stubbs, pp. 151-155. Though the details are probably fictitious, there is no reason for doubting that the interview took place. According to the chroniclers, Richard was disposed to recognise Anti-christ in the person of Pope Clement himself.

³ Martène and Durand, Thesaurus novus Anecdotorum, tom. iv. col. 1274, § 12.

With Raynerius, and attended by the faithful Luke, Joachim had definitely left the order, and retired into the hermitage of Pietralata. A little later, he founded the abbey of San Giovanni of Fiore or Flora, among the Calabrian mountains, which became the centre of a new and severer branch of the Cistercian rule, which was approved by Celestine III. in 1196. This remained Joachim's headquarters for the rest of his life, though he probably moved to and fro on the business of his order and kept in touch with the affairs of the world. We find him at Palermo, hearing the confession of the Empress Constance, that gran Costanza, whom Dante saw by the side of Piccarda Donati in the heaven of the Moon. Joachim's relations with the Empress make us wonder a little whether the poet's description of her as one who was never loosed from the veil of the heart, non fu dal vel del cor giammai disciolta, is altogether a correct portrait; for her idea of the confessional, according to Luke of Cosenza, seems to have been imperial rather than monastic, and Joachim had to impress upon her that, in spite of her rank, she must behave like an ordinary penitent:-

"On Good Friday, I was sitting with him in the cloister of Santo Spirito at Palermo; and, lo, he was summoned to the palace to the Empress Constance, who wished to confess to him. He went, and found her in the church, seated in her usual chair; bidden seat himself, he sat on a seat placed for him. But, when the Empress explained her purpose of confessing to him, he answered: 'I now hold the place of Christ, thou that of the penitent Magdalene. Come down, sit on the earth, and thus confess faithfully; for otherwise I may not hear thee.' The Empress descended, and sat upon the ground, and humbly confessed her sins: all wondering thereat, together with the Empress herself, who declared that the authority of an Apostle had been in the Abbot." ²

Luke tells us that Joachim's authority was so great among

¹ Par. iii. 117.

² Acta Sanctorum, vol. cit., p. 92. This was probably towards the end of Constance's life, between 1195 and 1198. Joachim had been in friendly relations with her husband, Henry VI. Cf. document, loc. cit., p. 106.

men of the world that his presence was deemed a stronger protection for a city than a mighty army. In the intervals of writing and giving counsel, he would wash out the infirmary of his abbey with his own hands, see to the proper cooking of the food for the sick, and himself make the beds of the monks. He delighted not only in ritual and the service of the altar (about which he was exceedingly zealous), but also in manual labour; in spite of his austerities, he was extraordinarily strong and robust physically, recking nothing of heat and cold, thirst and hunger. He was loving and kind to all, especially to the poor, but harsh to his own kindred—whom, through his dread of nepotism, he persisted in treating as strangers, in the unhappy fashion adopted by so many mediæval saints.

In the year 1200, Innocent III. being then on the papal throne, Joachim wrote a kind of encyclical letter, which is, as it were, his literary testament, though he implies that his work is by no means done. Starting from the brief of Clement III. thirteen years before, he declares that he began to write his books in obedience to the commands of Pope Lucius and Pope Urban. With God's inspiration and the correspondence of his own wits, he has lately brought to completion the Book of the Concord, the Exposition of the Apocalypse, and the Psaltery of Ten Strings; besides some smaller things, written against the Jews or against the foes of the Catholic Faith; and, as long as he is preserved in the body, he will not cease producing works for the edification of the faithful of Christ and especially of the monks. Owing to the difficulty of the times, he has not been able to present any of these works, save the Book of the Concord, to receive correction from the Holy See, and, although he is not conscious to himself of it, there may be things therein that need correction. The number of a man's days is uncertain, and he may die before he is able to fulfil the condition under which he composed these works, to wit, that he should submit them all to the judgment of the Pope. "I beseech, therefore, in the name of God Almighty, my fellow abbots and priors and the rest of my brethren who fear God, and

enjoin upon them by what authority I have, to take this present writing as my testament; and, as quickly as possible, gather together all the works I have hitherto composed, and anything else that I may happen to have written, up to the day of my death; and, leaving copies under safe custody, present them all for papal examination, to receive correction from that Chair, instead of myself, and to set forth my devotion and my fidelity towards it. I am ever prepared to observe what it has decreed or shall decree, and never to defend any opinion of my own against its holy faith; believing to the full what it believes; accepting correction both in morals and in doctrine; rejecting what it rejects, receiving what it receives; believing firmly that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, and that, although for a while it may be troubled and tossed by storms, its faith will not fail even to the consummation of the world." 1

This letter has been taken as marking Joachim's publication of his works, and his formal submission to the judgment of the Holy See; but it is probably no more than it purports to be: his testament and instruction to his monks in the event of his death, and, incidentally, a profession of his own faith. In any case, before any judgment was pronounced upon his doctrines, he died at Fiore, on 30th March, 1202, the Saturday before Passion Sunday. "I used to hear him say," writes Luke of Cosenza, "that he was never happier through all the year than in the fifteen days of the Passion, so that he always grieved that they should end. And perchance, because of this, it was granted to him that, on the Saturday on which Sitientes venite ad aquas is sung, he should end the grief of mortal life and attain to the true Sabbath, even as the hart panteth after the water-brooks."

Joachim's authentic works consist, in the first place, of the three books already mentioned: the *Concordia novi ac veteris Testamenti*, composed under the auspices of Lucius III., and

¹ Epistola prologalis domini Abbatis Joachim florensis omnium opusculorum suorum, prefixed, together with the brief of Clement III., to both the Concordia and the Expositio in Apocalipsim.

² Acta Sanctorum, vol. cit., p. 92.

apparently finished about 1188, as it seems to have been actually sent to Clement III.; the Expositio in Apocalipsim, also undertaken at the instigation of Pope Lucius, but evidently not finished until after 1195, as the author refers to a conversation that he had with a man at Messina in that year; and the Psalterium decem chordarum, begun about 1184, written simultaneously with the revision of the Expositio, and completed shortly before 1200. These three works, which were printed at Venice in 1519 and 1527, contain the essential Joachim. In addition, there are two minor treatises, Contra Judaeos and De articulis Fidei, to which he refers in his letter, and which are still unpublished; and an unfinished work, Super quattuor Evangelia or Concordia Evangeliorum, also unpublished, which has recently been studied by Professor Paul Fournier.² Two Latin hymns, De Patria Celesti and De Gloria Paradisi, are printed as his at the end of the Psalterium, and may be authentic. A number of spurious works of his school, such as the Interpretatio in Hieremian prophetam, the Scriptum super Esaiam prophetam, the De oneribus Prophetarum, and the Expositio Sybillae et Merlini, were fathered upon him during the thirteenth century, and several of them printed under his name in the sixteenth century.3 Professor Fournier was disposed to attribute to Joachim a work of a totally different kind: the Liber de vera philosophia: a book written apparently between 1180 and 1190, dealing with the theological disputes of the middle of the twelfth century, especially with reference to the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, representing Abelard and St. Bernard, Hugh of St. Victor and Peter Lombard, as having all more or less wandered from

¹Divini vatis Abbatis Joachim liber Concordie novi ac veteris Testamenti, Venetiis per Simonem de Luere, 13 Aprilis, 1519; Expositio magni prophete Abbatis Joachim in Apocalipsim, cui adiecta sunt eiusdem Psalterium decem chordarum opus prope divinum, etc., Venetiis in calcographia Francisci Bindoni et Maphei Pasyni, 17 Aprilis, 1527.

²Études sur Joachim de Flore et ses doctrines, Paris, 1909. For the MSS. of Joachim's works, vide H. Denisse, Das Evangelium aeternum und die Commission zu Anagni, in Archiv für Litteratur und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters, I., Berlin, 1885, pp. 90-98.

³ Cf. Tocco, op. cit., pp. 302-318.

the right path: but he now recognises that the attribution is impossible.¹

The general opinion of the Middle Ages, during his life and long after, acclaimed Joachim as a prophet. But he himself disclaimed the title, pleading that his gift was simply that of intuition, to enable him to interpret the Scriptures in reference to the past and future history of the Church. "The knowledge of things past," he says, "is the key of things to come." 2 His mystical reading of the story of the human race is the single theme of his three chief books; but it is approached, as it were, from a different standpoint in each. The Concordia deals with it mainly from the historical point of view, showing the essential harmony of the Old and New Testaments, whereby the former, taken in just proportion, is the symbol and precursor of the latter. Expositio, it is treated in the light of prophetical interpretation of the Revelation of St. John, and particularly in the study of the signs to come therein foretold. The Psalterium, on the other hand, is mainly based on the author's conception of the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity: the three Persons, though one in Essence and equal in Majesty, playing a different part, revealing themselves in a different degree, in the successive epochs of the world's history.

By a complicated system of generations, each equal to thirty years, Joachim divides history into periods, those of the old dispensation symbolising and foreshadowing those of the new. The epoch-marking personalities of the Old Testament find their counterpart in those of Christian times: Eliseus is repeated in St. Benedict; the defeat of Josiah by the Egyptians is repeated in that of Pope Leo IX. by the Normans; Jehoahaz, made king in spite of Pharaoh and dying in exile, foreshadows Gregory VII.³ These analogies and divisions, however, are subordinate to a simpler and more significant scheme. There are three states of the world, corresponding with the three Persons of the Blessed

¹ Études sur Joachim de Flore et ses doctrines, pp. 79 et seq.

² Expositio in Apocalipsim, f. 3.

³ Cf. Tocco, op. cit., pp. 334-373.

Trinity. The first is that of the Old Testament, pertaining to the Father, representing power and inspiring fear; the state from Adam to Christ, in which men lived according to the flesh, and "the people of the Lord were serving under the elements of this world, unable to obtain the liberty of the spirit". In the second, the wisdom hidden through the ages was revealed in the Son, a state anticipated by the prophet Eliseus and lasting up to the writer's own time, a state in which men live between flesh and spirit, and in which we have the Church under the dispensation of the New Testament, "in liberty with respect to the past, but not in liberty with respect to the future". The third state will be that of the Holy Ghost, "now not under the disguise of the letter, but in the full freedom of the spirit ": a new dispensation in which there will be no need for disciplinary institutions, for men will live according to the spirit, and in which the letter of the Gospel will be made void and consumed by spiritual understanding, or, as he says in another place, its water be turned to wine. The second epoch was drawing to a close, and the third was now at hand. Already in part anticipated by St. Benedict as the second state had been by Eliseus, its full development, praecellens claritas, was to be expected towards the end of the world.1

Joachim is convinced that the times are very evil. He pictures the corruption of the Church, the laxity and immorality of the clergy.² The philosophy of the twelfth century, that splendid intellectual movement which we are only now beginning to appreciate at its true worth, is to him mere vanity of vanities, the efforts of men puffed up by scholastic training, who are incapable of appreciating spiritual truths. Just as the disciples, returning to the Lord, wondered that He spoke with the woman of Samaria, so these men in their pride are amazed when they see spiritual men having spiritual discourse with the simple or with those outside the Catholic Faith. "Not without cause," he says, "on the feast of the

¹ Cf. especially Expositio in Apocalipsim, ff. 5-6 (de tribus statibus mundi).

² A passage about the neglect of the Benedictine rule, op. cit., ff. 80 v.- 81, anticipates Dante, Par. xxii. 73-93.

Holy Innocents, does the Church allow one chosen out of children to sit in the episcopal chair and perform in some part the office of the priest." The star that the seer in Patmos saw fall from heaven unto the earth will surely be some great theologian of the Church, like those he now sees triumphing in the schools.2 And, while these men thus waste their labours on fruitless speculation, attempting to give a purely rational explanation to the mysteries of faith, heresy is advancing by leaps and bounds, and the Saracens have reconquered the Holy City. For the heretical sects of his own time, the poor men of Lyons and the Patarini, Joachim cherishes an orthodox hatred. "There came," he writes, "a certain man, right prudent (as it seemed) and one who feared God, from the parts of Alexandria, in which he had been detained in bonds; and he said that he had heard from a certain great man among the Saracens that the Patarini had sent their ambassadors to them, asking communion and peace from them, and that they had brought back a certain message of unity and peace to those who had sent them. This I heard myself from that same man in the city of Messina in the year 1195." These heretics are the horses whose heads were as the heads of lions (Rev. ix. 17), and the second beast who came up out of the earth, who had two horns like a lamb and spake as a dragon (Rev. xiii. 11). We find, too, in Joachim, somewhat unexpectedly, an anticipation of social revolt; marking the injustice of class and the oppression of the poor, the Abbot anticipates a day when the downtrodden shall rise up and take vengeance upon their tyrants. is, indeed, one short passage of this kind that curiously anticipates some of the stanzas of Swinburne's Songs before Sunrise.4

Thus the whole existing order of things seemed crumbling away as Joachim wrote, and the new state seemed approaching. There are forty-two generations from Christ. The forty-first in the Church will begin in the year of the Lord

¹ Concordia Evangeliorum, cited by Fournier, op. cit., pp. 10 n., 11 n.

² Expositio in Apocalipsim, f. 130 v. ³ Ibid., 134.

⁴ Op. cit., f. 199 v. Cf. Fournier, op. cit., pp. 6, 21.

1201, "and it is to be expected with great dread".1 Now forty-two generations of thirty years each bring us to the year 1260, and it is then that the third state will most probably begin. This number, too, is mystically figured in the Scriptures. Elijah remained hidden from Achab for three years and six months; Judith was a widow three years and six months when she slew Holofernes; and, in the Revelation of St. John (xii. 6), the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.2 This third epoch will be preceded by the reappearance of Elijah and the coming of Antichrist. In it the regenerators and spiritual movers of men will be two new orders, living in apostolic poverty, not according to the ordinary monastic rule, but according to that of the Acts of the Apostles, when the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. Through these spiritual men the powers of evil will be overthrown, Roman and Greek will be united, the Jews will be converted, and this new state will abide to the end of the world, to the time of the manifest vision of God: "For so the chosen of God must go from virtue to virtue, and pass from brightness to brightness, until the glory of God is seen in Sion".3

So far it might be thought that the Everlasting Gospel merely bears the same relation to Joachim as Platonic Love does to Plato. And I saw another Angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel, to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people (Rev. xiv. 6). Joachim never, indeed, applies the phrase to his own doctrine, much less to any book of his; but it is a mistake to suppose, as is sometimes done, that its connection with his teaching was a later development. In the Expositio, he contrasts the state of spiritual understanding, which is to follow, with the Gospel of the New Testament which is in the letter; 4 and, in his Concordia Evangeliorum, he states that the Gospel as given us by Christ and the

¹ Concordia novi ac veteris Testamenti, ff. 55 v., 56.

² Ibid., ff. 12, 12 v., 67 v., 118.

³ Expositio in Apocalipsim, f. 5 v. ⁴ Ibid.

Apostles was temporal and transitory, whereas what is signified by it is eternal.¹ The identification of the Everlasting Gospel with the spiritual teaching of the third epoch is more explicitly seen in the *Psalterium*, where, speaking of the difference between the five times in which, according to the working of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, the state of mankind may be divided, he says:—

"But now we must treat of the fifth time, in the beginning of which we ourselves are: in which the Holy Spirit, sent by the Son, will perform His works in far more lofty fashion than He has hitherto wrought; that all may learn to honour the Holy Spirit even as they do the Father and the Son. In what? Assuredly in His Gospel. For whoso doth not, humbly and devoutly, receive His Gospel, does not honour Him as is meet. And what is His Gospel? That of which John speaks in the Apocalypse: I saw the Angel of God flying through the midst of heaven: and the Everlasting Gospel was given him (Rev. xiv. 6). What is His Gospel? That which proceeds from the Gospel of Christ. For the letter killeth; but the spirit quickeneth. On account of this, Truth itself saith: When He, the spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. And to show that He will receive of the Gospel of Christ and of His scripture, and, as it were changing water to wine, inebriate the elect, He adds and says: For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you (John xvi. 13, 14). This, then, is the work that the Holy Spirit will work in us. Teaching us all truth, He will lift up our minds to heavenly desires, and make us expect that day for which all the Saints have sighed, and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God. Needs must He change our minds; for, as God, when and as He wills, He can transform our hearts from carnal desires to the love of heavenly things; so that in some sort we shall not be what we were, but shall begin to be other men."2

¹ Cited by Denifle, op. cit., p. 53.

² Psalterium decem chordarum, ff. 259 v., 260.

It is clear that for Joachim the Everlasting Gospel is simply the spiritual interpretation of the Gospel of Christ, which will be the religious dispensation in the epoch of the Holy Spirit, and not, in any way, a book that can be written. In his Concordia Evangeliorum, it is expressly stated that this spiritual doctrine cannot be drawn up in writing or enclosed in one great volume, like the scriptures of the Old Testament and its own letter (the New Testament); but it is like the water of which Christ said to the woman of Samaria: Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John iv. 14).

It is, indeed, this very point—the substitution of the idea of the Everlasting Gospel as a written book to supersede the Gospel of Christ, for the original one of the Everlasting Gospel as an unwritten spiritual interpretation based upon that Gospel—that separates Gherardo of Borgo San Donnino and the Joachists from the authentic creed of Joachim himself.

Although certain doctrines of Joachim, in opposition to the teaching of Peter Lombard concerning the Blessed Trinity, were condemned by the Lateran Council in 1215, his main theory appears to have excited no suspicion until the middle of the thirteenth century. In the meantime, Francis and Dominic had founded their orders, and, although there can be no suggestion of any inspiration from Joachim in the lives of either patriarch, both Franciscans and Dominicans were disposed to claim that their orders had been foretold by the Abbot of Flora. Thus Gérard de Frachet, the Dominican provincial of Provence, who wrote his Vitae Fratrum between 1256 and 1259, at the bidding of Humbertus de Romanis, the fourth master-general of the order, says: "The abbot Joachim, founder of the order of Flora, wrote concerning this order of preachers in many of his books; and, describing the order and its habit, he bade his brethren that when, after his death, such an order arose, they should welcome it devoutly. Which they did, receiving our friars with

¹ Fournier, op. cit., p. 17, n. 3.

cross and procession when first they came to them." 1 But it was particularly among the Franciscans that the seed sown by Joachim fell upon congenial soil, and, in the violent dissensions that broke out in the order between the relaxed conventuals and the spirituals, a large section of the latter party ranged themselves under the Abbot's banner as "Joachists," fired by the notion that their order were the elect, the spiritual rulers of the new dispensation. Elias had reappeared in St. Francis, and Antichrist was already in the world in the person of Frederick II. The death of the latter, in 1250, did not shake the convictions of the more stalwart among them. Fra Salimbene of Parma, one of the weaker brethren in the Joachist faith, tells us how, a few years later, Fra Gherardo of Borgo San Donnino came to Modena, not a whit abashed, assuring him that Antichrist was already preparing to accomplish the mystery of iniquity. Demanding a Bible, he promptly expounded the whole eighteenth chapter of Isaiah, the chapter beginning Woe to the land shadowing with wings, with reference to the King of Castile (Alphonso X.): "And I said to him: Sayest thou, then, that this King of Castile, who now reigneth, is Antichrist? And he answered: Without doubt, he is that accursed Antichrist concerning whom all the doctors and saints, who have spoken of this matter, have borne witness."2

This was shortly after Fra Gherardo had written his introduction to Joachim's works, the famous Introductorius in Evangelium Æternum. The storm raised by this composition was partly due to the fact that its publication coincided with the struggle for the possession of the chairs of theology at the university of Paris between the friars and the secular clergy, headed by Guillaume de Saint Amour, who found this Introductorius an excellent weapon with which to assail the mendicant friars as heretics. The work was sent to the pope, Alexander IV., by the Bishop of Paris in 1255, and submitted

¹ Vitae Fratrum, ed. Reichert, p. 13. Similarly Theodoricus de Appoldia, Acta ampliora S. Dominici, Acta Sanctorum, August, tom. i. p. 570. Cf. Fournier, op. cit., pp. 43-49.

² Chronica fratris Salimbene, ed. H. Holder-Egger, p. 456.

to the examination of three Cardinals at Anagni. These three Cardinals—Odo, Bishop of Tusculum, Stephen, Bishop of Palestrina, and the Dominican Hugo, Cardinal of Santa Sabina—were none of them Italians. They were among the most learned members of the Curia, and it is evident that they proceeded with great caution, insisting, for instance, upon having an authentic copy of Joachim's own works procured for purposes of collation. We only know the contents of Fra Gherardo's work from the extracts made by this commission in their report. From them it is clear that the Joachists went beyond what Joachim himself had taught. They held that, about the year 1200, the spirit of life went out of the Old and New Testaments, and that Joachim's own three books—the Concordia, the Expositio, and the Psalterium —constituted the three books of the Everlasting Gospel which were to take their place. The interpretation of the inner meaning of the Scriptures pertained not to the Pope or the official clergy, but to the barefooted friars of this new dispensation. The Gospel of Christ and the whole system of the Church would be superseded and rendered void in a few years.

The Introductorius was solemnly condemned by Pope Alexander in 1256, and the condemnation seems to have been extended, a little later, to the works of Joachim himself. I need not repeat the familiar story of how St. Bonaventura, elected minister-general of the order in the following year in place of the Joachist John of Parma, proceeded severely against the Franciscan Joachists, sentencing Fra Gherardo and Fra Leonardo to perpetual imprisonment. But the official condemnation of Joachism was less potent than the logic of events. The fatal year, 1260, came, and, save for the processions of flagellants, nothing happened. To the gibe, "And thou also wast a Joachist," Salimbene answered: "Thou speakest sooth; but, when Frederick died who was Emperor, and the year 1260 passed, I entirely laid

¹ The text of the Protocoll der Commission zu Anagni is edited by Denisle, loc. cit., pp. 99-142.

aside that doctrine, and I am disposed henceforth to believe nothing save what I see ".1"

St. Thomas Aquinas in the Summa Theologica, without naming Joachim, combats the theory that "there will be a third condition of things under the Holy Spirit, when spiritual men shall be the rulers". He cites the text, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled (Matt. xxiv. 34), as meaning that the New Law, "the estate of the faithful of Christ," will remain until the consummation of the world. "There cannot," he says, "be any more perfect state of the present life than the dispensation of the New Law, which succeeded to that of the Old as the perfect to the imperfect; but the condition of the New Law varies according to places and times and persons, inasmuch as men are more or less perfectly possessed of the grace of the Holy Spirit." And he refers to the Epistle to the Romans (viii. 2), the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, as showing that the New Law is not only the law of Christ, but the law of the Holy Spirit likewise: "wherefore we must not expect another law which is to be that of the Holy Spirit".2 where, he formally controverts Joachim by name, and, while cordially acknowledging his good faith and orthodox intention, he convicts him of unconscious heresy, and explicitly denies the claim, that Dante was to make on his behalf a few years later, that he was "endowed with the spirit of prophecy".3

But, between St. Thomas and Dante, had come Ubertino da Casale, an ardent disciple of John of Parma; a man of heroic virtue and a strenuous preacher of righteousness, who had revived the theories of Joachim in a modified form. In the mountain solitude of La Verna, in 1305, he composed his famous treatise, the *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu*, which is, chronologically, the last of the literary sources of the *Divina Commedia*.⁴ In the fifth book of this work, Ubertino divides

¹ Chronica, ed. cit., p. 302.

² Summa Theologica, I. ii., Q. 106, A. 4.

³ Opusculum xxiv. (Expositio super secundam decretalem); Commentum in Lib. IV. Sententiarum, dist. 43, Q. 1, A. 3.

⁴ Liber qui intitulatur Arbor vite crucifixe Jesu, et dicitur opus Ubertini de Casali. Venetiis, per Andream de Bonettis de Papia, anno M.CCCC. LXXXV.

the history of the Church into six states, of which the sixth, like Joachim's third epoch, is that of "the renovation of evangelical life and the overthrowing of the antichristian sect, under the voluntarily poor who possess nothing in this life ". This sixth state, he says, "began at the time of the seraphic man Francis; albeit it will more fully appear in the damnation of the great harlot of Babylon" [the Ecclesia carnalis]. The seventh state, as far as it pertains to this life, "is a certain peaceful and wondrous participation of future glory, as though the heavenly Jerusalem were seen to have come down to earth," and it will begin with the slaying of Antichrist. The eighth state is the general resurrection at the Last Judgment.1 Ubertino cites the authority of Bonaventura for identifying St. Francis with the Angel in the Apocalypse (Rev. vii. 2), ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, and declares that he was prophesied by Joachim as the angelical man to come into the world at the beginning of the sixth state, or third epoch, singularly and manifestly to renew the life of Christ.2

Now, while the main source of Dante's picture of St. Francis in the eleventh canto of the *Paradiso* was undoubtedly the *Legenda sancti Francisci* of St. Bonaventura, he was also directly influenced, especially in his conception of the part assigned to the two orders in the divine scheme and in the studied symmetry in the lives of the two founders, by Ubertino da Casale and the Joachist prophecies.³ It is highly probable that what traces of Joachism we find in the *Divina Commedia* came to Dante for the most part at second hand, through the medium of the *Arbor vitae crucifixae*.

Are we to regard the *Divina Commedia* as a work of the school of the Everlasting Gospel? In the twelfth canto of

¹ Op. cit., lib. v. cap. i., Jesus prolem multiplicans.

² Ibid. cap. 3., Jesus Franciscum generans.

³ This was first pointed out by Umberto Cosmo, Le mistiche nozze di frate Francesco con madonna Povertà, in the Giornale Dantesco, Anno VI. (Florence, 1898). Thus Par. xi. 28-42 and Par. xii. 37-45 are based upon Arbor vitae crucifixae, lib. 5, cap. 2 (Jesus vilificatus) and cap. 3 (Jesus Franciscum generans), and the prayer to Holy Poverty, ibid., lib. v. cap. 3, is the direct source of Par. xi. 70-72.

the Paradiso, in the second garland of great teachers in the sphere of the Sun, Dante beholds the soul of Joachim himself, thus reconciled with St. Thomas, who had controverted his doctrines, and placed by the side of St. Bonaventura, who had persecuted his followers, but who now points out his glorified spirit to the poet's gaze:—

Qui . . . lucemi da lato Il calabrese abate Gioacchino, Di spirito profetico dotato.¹

From the way in which Joachim thus appears, at the end of the cantos in which the work of St. Francis and St. Dominic have been exalted together, it would seem as though the poet regarded him (as Ubertino does) mainly as the prophet of the movement which they represented. Döllinger was, I think, the first who connected the Divina Commedia explicitly with the doctrines of the Abbot of Flora. "Dante was a Joachist, but after his own eclectic fashion, with the reservation which his favourite doctrine of the divine right and calling of the Empire rendered indispensable." 2 laid stress upon Joachim's position in the fourth heaven, as the only prophet recognised by the poet since the time of the Apostles; and he argued that the prophecy of the Veltro, the deliverer to come, which in its various forms plays so important a part in the poem, the deliverer who is to hunt the Wolf back to Hell, refers to Joachim's order of spiritual men who shall guide the Church in the third epoch.

The analogy certainly exists, but must not be pressed too far. Dante's Veltro non ciberà terra nè peltro, and in the life of Joachim's spiritual men non acquirebitur possessio terrenae hereditatis. The Veltro will hunt the wolf through every town,—

Fin che l' avrà rimessa nello inferno, Là onde invidia prima dipartilla;

and Joachim's order similarly certabit contra omnia vitia et superabit ea.³ It is clear that the work to be done by Dante's

¹ Par. xii. 139-141.

^{&#}x27; Studies in European History, trans. M. Warre (London, 1890), p. 96.

³ Inf. i. 103-105, 109-111; Expositio in Apocalipsim, ff. 175 v., 176.

Veltro, in renovating the world and bringing back the Golden Age, is at least analogous with that of Joachim's spiritual order in establishing the dispensation of love and liberty under the Everlasting Gospel. But the new epoch that Dante foresees is essentially different from that of Joachim. In the latter, although Joachim in one place declares that the Church of Peter will not fail, but will be changed into greater glory and abide to eternity,1 it is manifest that the official Church will be largely, if not entirely, superseded, and there will be no more need of disciplinary institutions than in the Earthly Paradise, where man is crowned and mitred over himself; 2 but, in Dante's scheme, the existent Church will be renovated by a return to its primal simplicity, and the ideal Empire will shine out in its full glory. The prophetic side of his poem takes its colour from Joachism, but the régime of his ideal remains that of the De Monarchia. In the mystical rose of Paradise, where his vision is consummated in the Empyrean, there is no place left for a third dispensation, where the blessed of the Old Testament and those of the Christian Law will equally fill the celestial garden:-

> Or mira l' alto provveder divino, Chè l' uno e l'altro aspetto della fede Egualmente empierà questo giardino.³

Nevertheless, at the close of Dante's spiritual experiences in the fourth sphere, there comes a singularly beautiful episode, but one somewhat difficult adequately to explain, which seems again to be coloured by Joachism. A third circle of spirits, dimly at first and then with dazzling vividness, appears beyond the two garlands that already surround the Poet and Beatrice:—

Ed ecco intorno di chiarezza pari
Nascere un lustro sopra quel che v' era,
Per guisa d'orizzonte che rischiari.
E sì come al salir di prima sera
Comincian per lo ciel nuove parvenze,

¹ Concordia novi ac veteris Testamenti, f. 95 v. Cf. Tocco, op. cit. p. 470.

² Purg. xxvii. 139-142.

³ Par. xxxii. 37-39.

Sì che la vista pare e non par vera;

Parvemi lì novelle sussistenze

Cominciar a vedere, e fare un giro

Di fuor dall' altre due circonferenze.

O vero isfavillar del santo spiro,

Come si fece subito e candente

Agli occhi miei che vinti non soffriro!

Ma Beatrice sì bella e ridente

Mi si mostrò, che tra quelle vedute

Si vuol lasciar che non seguir la mente.¹

To this Benvenuto da Imola gives a somewhat prosaic interpretation. Since the doctors, he says, were as many and as brilliant as the stars of heaven, Dante merely chose out a few of the chief for the first two garlands, and relegated the rest to a third great circle enclosing the other two, and his eyes were dazzled, because his intellect could not fully investigate the deep teaching of so many illustrious authors.2 If, however, it may be done without violence to the perspective of the Paradiso, it is tempting—in the sphere in which the much-maligned Abbot Joachim has been triumphantly vindicated as a true prophet—to attach some prophetical significance to what Dante evidently intends to be mysterious. He seems to distinguish no new spirit, but to be dazzled by the sudden revelation of the divine Love, the Paraclete, O vero isfavillar del santo spiro. Although condemned by the poet's teachers, Aquinas and Bonaventura, may not this be, as it were, a transfiguration of what was of permanent spiritual value in the doctrine of the Everlasting Gospel? A suggestion, it may be, of a brief epoch of quickened spiritual vitality, of the renewal of the evangelical life, yet to come, before both halves should thus be made full and equal in the Celestial Garden?

EDMUND G. GARDNER.

¹ Par. xiv. 67-81.

² Benevenuti de Rambaldis de Imola Commentum super Dantis Aldigherii Comoediam, ed. Vernon and Lacaita, V. pp. 117-120.

FRANCISCANS AT OXFORD.1

THE history of the Franciscan settlement in Oxford extends over a little more than three hundred years—from October, 1224, to August, 1538; it is obvious that we can only touch on a few points, and I shall first deal with the foundation and site of the friary.

The first two Franciscans who reached Oxford in October, 1224, lodged for a week in the Dominican friary, then situated at the back of the present Town Hall. Friar Richard of Ingworth and Friar Richard of Devon were both interesting people. Richard of Ingworth, according to Eccleston, was the first Franciscan who preached north of the Alps, he became first provincial minister of Ireland, and eventually he went as a missionary to the Saracens and died in Palestine. Richard of Devon, a young acolyte in 1224, led a strenuous life, traversing many provinces in obedience to the commands of his superiors and dying after a long and wearing illness at Romney. These two hired a house where the Franciscans remained for less than a year, and where they were joined "by many honest bachelors and many eminent men". The position of this first convent is unknown. But in the summer of 1225 the friars hired another house from Richard the Miller, who soon afterwards "conferred the land and house on the community of the town for the use of the Friars". This formed the nucleus of their later acquisitions. It was situated just within the city wall, between the wall and what is now Church Street: in the Middle Ages, Freren Street. The Franciscan friary lay in a part of Oxford not often visited by tourists and sightseers or even by members of the University.

¹ This paper contains the substance of a lecture given at the Franciscan College, Cowley, 10 November, 1909, on the occasion of the Seventh Centenary of the foundation of the Franciscan Order.

If you go out of St. Aldate's along Pembroke Street, past St. Ebbe's Church you will come to Church Street, which formed the friars' northern boundary. Or going further down St. Aldate's, beyond the gate of Christchurch you will come on the right to Brewer's Street (at the entrance to which was the south gate of the town); passing along Brewer's Street, you will have on your right the old city wall, and in the next street you cross-Littlegate Street-was the Little Gate, which formed the eastern point of the friars' grounds. On the other side of Littlegate Street, Charles Street leads to Pinson's Gardens, which is nearly the centre of the Grey Friars—and so on to Paradise Square and the West Gate near the castle, which was the western limit of the friary precints. considerable area—lying on both sides of the city wall which ran right through the friary grounds—and the friars did not get it all at once: in fact for about a hundred years they went on acquiring land, the largest additions being made in 1244-6. The greater part, if not all of it, was held by the community of the town in trust for the friars, who could own no property even in common. I am not going through the details of the history of these acquisitions, and will only mention one point. In the city archives there is still preserved an original deed 1 -not dated but drawn up about 1229-which is I think the oldest private deed (as opposed to the royal records) relating to the Franciscans in England. The deed announces that William son of Richard de Wileford has granted to the mayor and good men of Oxford his house in the parish of St. Ebbe as a dwelling-place for the Friars Minor for ever-on condition that the good men of Oxford perform the service due to the chief lords of the fee and pay to William de Wileford one pound of cummin a year: for the house the said good men of Oxford have given to William 43 marks sterling "ex elemosyna collecta," or raised by public subscription.2

¹ Printed in *The Grey Friars in Oxford*, by A. G. Little (Oxford Historical Society, 1892).

² A close parallel to the relations which existed between the Franciscans and the municipal authorities in mediæval England is afforded by the relations which exist between the Capuchins and the municipal authorities in some of the Swiss

The earliest buildings were small and mean. The infirmary was so low that a man could scarcely stand upright The first church was a small chapel—probably only less poor than that at Cambridge where one carpenter in one day made and set up the fifteen pairs of beams or rafters (which probably formed the skeleton of the roof). The little chapel at Oxford lives in one well-known story. brethren at all times were so joyful and merry among themselves that they could scarcely restrain their laughter when they looked at each other. So it happened at Oxford, where the young brethren were frequently given to much laughter, that it was enjoined on one of them that he should receive the 'discipline' as often as he laughed in the choir or the refectory. Now it happened that after he had received the discipline eleven times in one day, and yet could not stop laughing, the following night he dreamt that the whole community were standing in the choir, and as usual the brethren began to laugh, when, behold, the crucifix which stood at the door of the choir, turned towards them as though it were alive, and said: 'They are the sons of Corah who at the time of divine office laugh or sleep'. It seemed to him that the figure on the Cross strove to free its hands as though wishing to come down and go away, but the custodian of the place went up and made the nails fast so that it could not come down. When this dream was related to the brethren they were terrified and henceforth bore themselves without overmuch laughter."

The new church was being erected in 1245-1250, as we learn from the public records. The friars were allowed to pull down part of the city wall which ran through their grounds and the king granted "that the north side of the church built and to be built in the street under the wall may supply the breach of the wall so far as it is to reach". Now in one part all traces of the wall have disappeared—a little to the north of Pinson's Gardens: and here no doubt the

cantons, where the friaries are looked upon as institutions of public utility and the monasteries built and kept in repair by the municipalities in which they are situated. Church stood; the tradition is perhaps preserved in "Church Place". There is a puzzling description of the church as it stood in the fifteenth century, from which it appears that the whole length was about 240 feet, the width of choir and nave 30 feet, the width of north aisle (the only aisle) which extended the length of the nave was 30 feet at its widest part but narrowed towards the east to 12 feet. (The peculiar shape was perhaps due to the aisle following the direction of the wall, which did not run due east and west at this point.)

Of the buildings not a trace remains. In the seventeenth century Wood writes "the ruins of this college are gone to ruin," and the scanty fragments which he saw—such as the remains of the principal entrance in Littlegate Street (probably where the latter is now joined by Charles Street) and the scantier fragments which Hearne and Parkinson (author of the anonymous Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica) saw as they walked towards the Watergate, have long since disappeared. It is disappointing. But the Franciscan spirit never lived in bricks and mortar. Let us remember the retort of the provincial minister, William of Nottingham, when some one threatened to report him to the general for not undertaking more building: "I shall tell the general that I did not enter the Order to build walls".

One is disposed to think that Thomas of Eccleston's praises of the English Province are somewhat coloured by his national feeling: that, when he tells us how Albert of Pisa praised the English province above all others, how John of Parma cried: "I would that England might be set in the midst of the world to be a model to all the churches," we may be hearing the voice of the English patriot. I will therefore quote a sentence from the latest historian of the Order—Father Heribert Holzapfel: "It is undoubtedly true that England has given to the Franciscan Order more really eminent men of learning—above all, more original thinkers—than all the rest of the nations put together".

The greatest names referred to are those of Alexander of Hales, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, William of Ocham, all of

whom made contributions of first-rate importance to philo-Alexander, as far as I know, had nothing to do with Oxford: the three others were all Oxford men. course, in the second rank there are a large number of Oxford Franciscans whom the world of learning and thought delight and should delight to honour: such as Adam Marsh, of whom we shall have something to say later on; John of Wales, the great populariser of theological and philosophical learning; John of Pecham, famous for his scientific works and his controversial writings as well as for his poems; William of Ware and Richard Middleton, both masters of Duns Scotus; William de Mara, the great Hebrew scholar and critic of Thomas Aquinas; Thomas Docking, the biblical commentator. These are just a few of the Oxford Franciscans of the thirteenth century. The list might easily be doubled or trebled. The universities of Europe-Bologna, Naples, Paris, Rome-again and again obtained their lecturers from the Franciscan Convent at Oxford.

A perusal of the titles of the extant works of these Franciscan doctors will impress on us the fact that the Franciscan Order had travelled far from the simplicity of St. Francis: the Order has become one of the "Student Orders". revolution had taken place, a revolution so rapid and striking that it was fully recognised by contemporaries both inside and outside the Order, and which was denounced by some, lamented by others, defended by others. To some Paris seemed the successor of Jerusalem who destroyed the prophets. "O Paris, Paris, thou that destroyest Assisi!" such was the bitter cry of the Spirituals. "I confess before God," writes Bonaventura, "that it is this that has made me especially love the life of St. Francis, that it is like the beginning and the full perfection of the Church: for the Church first began from simple fishermen, and then rose to include the most distinguished and most learned doctors: this same growth you will see in the religion of St. Francis."

Some such development was inevitable in any case, and it was hastened by the friars settling in University towns. The earliest crisis occurred at Bologna about 1219, when St.

Francis was away on his eastern mission, and enough is known from the early chroniclers to show how fiercely the founder struggled against the new spirit. On his return he went to Bologna but refused to stay at the Franciscan friary: he lodged with the Dominicans and only visited his own brethren to denounce their ways. The leader of the new movement was Friar Peter Stacia, doctor of laws. When Francis realised that this man was in his heart opposed to the purity of the Rule he pronounced a curse on him. As Peter was a great man in the world and loved by the ministers on account of his learning, the brethren begged St. Francis, towards the end of his life, to remove the curse and give the brother the grace of his blessing. "My sons," he replied, "I cannot bless him whom the Lord hath cursed, and cursed he is "

Let us see something of this movement in Oxford. Thomas of Eccleston (who entered the Order about 1233) writes: "After the friary had been enlarged in the town where the chief school of learning flourished in England and where the university of scholars was wont to congregate, brother Agnellus caused a school of decent dimensions to be built in the place of the brethren, and asked Master Robert Grosseteste of holy memory to lecture there to the friars. Under him in a short time they made extraordinary progress both in discussing problems and in those subtle moralities which are suitable for preaching." No one could accuse Agnellus, the first provincial minister of England, of being an enemy to the purity of the Rule. His zeal for poverty often outran discretion, as when he built the infirmary at Oxford, or compelled the brethren of Gloucester to give back a plot of ground which they had acquired for the enlargement of their house—which they soon afterwards had to recover with great difficulty. And the same may be said of the other friars who may be regarded as the founders of the Oxford school. Adam Marsh, their first great teacher in the Order, had given up great possessions to assume the habit of St. Francis; as chief of the commission appointed by the English province to consider the revision of the Rule, he sent a

report to the General Minister, begging that the Rule might be left without alteration just as it was written by St. Francis under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost: an indiscreet well-wisher sent him a bag of money, when he refused it the messenger threw it down in his cell and left it; Adam returned it unopened to the donor, with a grave letter of thanks and remonstrance. William of Nottingham, whose services in the cause of University education we shall have occasion to mention later, though not so strict an upholder of poverty as Agnellus, was yet so strict that he ordered the stone walls of the dormitory of the friars at Shrewsbury to be removed and replaced by mud walls, in accordance with Franciscan poverty. Such were the men who inaugurated and directed the school of the friars at Oxford. It cannot be said that Oxford was the destroyer of Assisi.

Grosseteste was a whole-hearted supporter of the movement in favour of learning, as the one sure way to avoid stagnation. "He sometimes told Friar Peter of Tewkesbury," says Eccleston, "that unless the brethren devoted themselves to learning and to the serious study of the divine law, the same fate would befall us as had befallen the other religious, whom we see, alas! walking in the darkness of ignorance."

The range and variety of Grosseteste's knowledge was amazing, and his influence in guiding early Franciscan thought and study was profound. His works deserve a much more careful study than they have yet, so far as I know, received. Only a few of his 147 dicta have been printed. These, which exist in several MSS., are partly sermons but mostly notes for his lectures. Another treatise, Compendium Scientiarum, exists I believe in one MS. at Cambridge and has never been edited. It was perhaps the first of the encyclopædic works of the thirteenth century, and hence is of first-rate importance in the history of mediæval thought. The last chapter is on "the Unity of Knowledge". All knowledge has for its ultimate object theology, the knowledge of God. "God is the first form of all things," is one of his expressions, and he defines form as "that which gives being to anything". It was this realisation of the unity of knowledge

which inspired his detailed researches into the laws of optics, the laws of astronomy (he explained the errors of the Julian calendar and pointed out the need of reforms in the calendar which were ultimately adopted in the sixteenth century—in England in the eighteenth): it was this too which inspired his study of languages—Greek and Hebrew—and made him take such pains to get accurate texts both of the Holy Scriptures and of Aristotle.

In all these directions his chief pupil and fellow-worker was Adam Marsh, first Regent Master among the Franciscans at Oxford—"one of the great scholars of the world," says the Italian friar Salimbene; and the greatest pupil of both of them was Roger Bacon.

Of Adam Marsh as a teacher and thinker we know little except what Roger Bacon tells us. He constantly links "Nobody can attain to proficiency Adam with Grosseteste. in the science of mathematics by the method hitherto known, unless he devotes to its study thirty or forty years, as is evident from the case of those who have flourished in those departments of knowledge, such as the Lord Robert of holy memory, and friar Adam Marsh, . . . and that is the reason why so few study that science." Again: "there were found some famous men, as Robert Bishop of Lincoln, and Adam Marsh and some others, who were aware that the power of mathematics is capable of unfolding the causes of all things and of giving a sufficient explanation of human and divine phenomena; and the assurance of this fact is to be found in the writings of those great men, as, for instance, in their works on the impressions, on the rainbow and the comets, on the generation of heat, on the investigation of geography, on the sphere, and on other questions appertaining both to theology and to natural philosophy". (By "the power of mathematics," Bacon seems to mean much what we should call "the reign of law".) Several times Bacon calls Grosseteste and Adam "perfect in all wisdom". "Few have attained to consummate wisdom in the perfection of philosophy: Solomon attained to it, and Aristotle in relation to his times, and in a later age Avicenna, and in our own days Robert Bishop of

Lincoln and Adam Marsh." These are the words of a very severe critic, for Roger Bacon declared that the *Summa* of Alexander of Hales was little better than a horseload of rubbish, that all that was useful in the ponderous tomes of Albertus Magnus could be put in a few pages, that Thomas Aquinas became a teacher before he had been adequately taught, and lectured on a philosophy and a theology which he half understood.

That Adam's fame was European is shown by Grosseteste's letter in 1245. Adam had accompanied the bishop to the Council of Lyons. On their return they were detained in or near Paris. Grosseteste writes to the English provincial minister, William of Nottingham, to hasten Adam's return: "You know that it is not safe for Brother Adam to remain longer in these parts, as many are most anxious to keep him in Paris, especially now that Alexander of Hales and J. de Rupellis are dead; and so both you and I would be deprived of our greatest comfort—which God forbid".

Adam's letters, printed in Mon Franc. i., are the only writings of his that have come down to us—they were nearly all written between c. 1250 and 1256—towards the end of his life. They show us a man busy with affairs of Church and State accompanying the Archbishop on his visitation (much against his will), sent abroad on the king's business, attending the Parliament in London, summoned by the king to give advice on urgent affairs of State—and giving such unpalatable advice that he thinks his Majesty will not trouble him again for a long time. Then we find him-just at the period when the House of Commons was struggling into existence—discussing with Grosseteste and Simon de Montfort the principles of constitutional government. All this hardly coincides with one's preconceived notions of the life of an ardent Franciscan in the middle of the thirteenth century; it is not the less interesting on that account. St. Francis himself more than once interfered in politics to make peace between the warring city-states of Italy; and Adam Marsh was following in his footsteps when he advocated the cause of selfgovernment against despotism or protected the Jews from the

fury of the mob. The letters show him equally zealous in performing humbler duties. He busies himself for one poor woman who is in great need, for another who has got into the hands of lawyers; many letters are written to obtain alms or loans for poor students; others to get materials for study for the friars; vellum, copies of treatises of various kinds. He obtains from an Italian brother extracts from Abbot Joachim's prophetic writings—which he sends to Grosseteste with a request "to read the book in your bedchamber in the presence of your secretaries, and when you have had it transcribed, please return it to me". (Joachim's prophecies contained explosive matter.) He is in communication with the bishop of Roskild about a mission of English Franciscans to Denmark. The appointment of friars as students and lecturers in Universities or schools of the Order at home and abroad is a subject constantly demanding his attention. The question of the relations of the friars to the University of Oxford occupies much of his time and thought about 1253. How many chairs of theology might the friars occupy in the University? How reconcile the University custom that no one should take a degree in theology unless he had previously taken a degree in arts, with the constitution of the Order which forbade a friar to take a degree in arts? Questions of this kind in Paris helped to produce open war between the regulars and seculars; the Dominican convent was in a state of siege; Thomas Aquinas, who took his D.D. at this time, had to be protected by royal troops. In Oxford the difficulties were for the time being settled amicably by a compromise without loss of temper on either side, the chief spokesman for the mendicants being Adam Marsh.

It has been urged that Roger Bacon (c. 1214-1294) in his way of thinking, in his interests and methods, was typical of the learned Franciscans of the first and second generations—and exceptional only in the extent and depth of his knowledge. It is true that a good many Oxford Franciscans were interested in the subjects which he made his own: we may instance John Pecham's work on perspective, William de Mara's Hebrew studies, and the tradition of Thomas Bungay's

close association with Bacon. On the other hand it is clear from Roger's works that he regarded himself as a voice crying in the wilderness; and it is clear from the later history of mediæval philosophy that he was opposed to the dominant tendencies of his age. We may, however, say that he represented the highest point reached by that Oxford school of thought which was founded by Grosseteste and carried on by Adam Marsh.

Like Grosseteste he feels intensely the unity of knowledge; and he gives a definition of philosophy which it would be difficult to improve. "The end of all true philosophy is to arrive at a knowledge of the Creator through knowledge of the created world." The hindrances to the progress of true philosophy among the Latins he sums up under four headings: (1) dependence on "fragile" authority; (2) yielding to established custom; (3) allowing weight to popular opinion; (4) concealment of real ignorance with pretence of knowledge (the special failing of University pro-He constantly denounces the baneful influence of authority. The Fathers after all were men, and used the same faculty of reason that men now possess. Those now regarded as infallible authorities spent a good deal of their time in refuting each other, which they would not have done if they had been infallible. We should give them all due honour—but those who are later in order of time enjoy the labours of those who have gone before, and therefore should make more progress: "Quanto juniores, tanto perspicaciores". For reliance on authority he would substitute first-hand knowledge derived from direct observation and experiment. Especially he insists on this in two departments of knowledge—in grammar (or philology) and textual criticism, and in physics. In order to understand the Holy Scriptures and Aristotle, we must first have an accurate knowledge of Greek and Hebrew: the translations are unreliable; those of Aristotle especially are so bad that Roger says if he could he would burn every one of them. From an interesting passage it might seem that Grosseteste had been driven by the badness and unintelligibility of the translations of Aristotle to discard Aristotle's authority and rely on his own observations and experiments.

Roger Bacon seems to have had an adequate knowledge of Greek, Hebrew and Arabic. A fragment of a Greek grammar by him has recently been printed. In his study of Hebrew he seems to have had a good many fellow-workers It is interesting to note that a number of in his own order. Latin and Hebrew psalters dating from the thirteenth century still exist in MS. in English libraries (e.g. in Westminster; Trinity College, Cambridge; Corpus Christi College, Oxford) which are probably of Franciscan origin. In his researches into physical science he was influenced by the Arabic philosophers—such as Avicenna and Alhazen. The basis of physics he shows to be mathematics. His theory is that all natural phenomena, all generation, change, transformation, are the result of force acting on matter, and force is invariably subject to mathematical law: so all natural philosophy is ultimately mathematical.1 It follows from this that the method of investigation in natural philosophy is essentially deductive. But he is never weary of insisting on the necessity of what he calls "Experimental Science"—"the queen of all the sciences "-which seems to be a method rather than what we should call a science. The results arrived at by "argument" must always be tested and verified by observation and experiment.

It is difficult to say what influence Bacon has had on the history of thought: his direct influence was probably small. Nowadays he is remembered as the inventor of gunpowder (which he did not invent) and as the prophet of railways and motors and flying machines. To the sixteenth century he was an uncanny but fascinating master of the black arts. May I recall two references to him in the Middle Ages—both by Franciscans? The first is by a contemporary. An English friar who wrote a Liber Exemplorum about 1270 begins one of his Exempla thus: "I must not omit to mention a story about the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary which was

¹ See Roger Bacon: the Philosophy of Science in the Middle Ages. By Robert Adamson, 1876.

once told to me and to Friar Roger Bacon at Paris. surgeon who was my fellow parishioner, Peter of Arden (he had married a wife in Paris and was a citizen of Paris) told me and friar Roger Bacon, that a Spanish magician, a friend of his, wishing to amuse him, made a circle according to his art and called up a demon who answered every question put to him." Not a word more about Roger Bacon in the book! This good friar did not realise that he had known one of the greatest thinkers the world has seen. The other reference is contained in a Franciscan collection written in 1385 (the writer is thinking of the burning glass and the telescope; notice his contempt for the experimental science). "Friar Roger Bacon took such delight in his experiments that instead of attending to his lectures and writings he made two mirrors in the University of Oxford: by one of them you could light a candle at any hour, day or night; in the other you could see what people were doing in the uttermost parts of the The result was that students either spent their time in lighting candles at the first mirror instead of studying books, or, on looking into the second and seeing their relations or friends dying and lying ill, left Oxford to the ruination of the University—and so both mirrors were broken by the common counsel of the University."

Let us turn now to another aspect of Franciscan activity The Oxford school was not concerned only with at Oxford. the advancement of learning, it was concerned also with the spread of learning. The Franciscan convents at Oxford and also at Cambridge were centres of an educational organisation which spread throughout the country-centres of "university extension". The chief founder and organiser of this scheme was William of Nottingham, provincial minister 1240-1254. This was a very long time to hold office. After he had been in office eight years, the minister general, John of Parma, in the chapter at Oxford in 1248 suggested that he should be superseded; the chapter was unanimous in asking that he should be retained as provincial. At length the general chapter of Metz in 1254 deposed him. As soon as the news reached, England, a provincial chapter was summoned

and William re-elected. In the meantime William had died abroad—at Marseilles or Genoa—and an interesting constitutional quarrel between the general and provincial chapters was avoided. These facts imply that Friar William had the power of attaching men to him to an unusual degree. Thomas of Eccleston knew him well and loved him deeply, and in reading the pages of his chronicle one feels something of the attraction of the minister. It would be worth making a careful character-study of him-if materials are sufficient. The only work of his that has come down to us 1 is referred to by Eccleston thus: "Upon the words of the Holy Gospel he would ponder most devoutly: wherefore he compiled most useful canons on the concordance of the Four Gospels by Clement of Llanthony, and caused the commentary of Clement to be transcribed in its entirety in the Order". I should like to think that William of Nottingham set on foot a very important work—a sort of catalogue of patristic commentaries on the Bible with indications of the libraries in England where MSS. of each could be found. This work is known as Opus Septem Custodiarum, the libraries being grouped according to the Franciscan custody in which they were situated. The peculiarity of the list of seven custodies is that there are eight—one of them being Sarum. Sarum was not a custody in the fourteenth century, but it was when Eccleston wrote and when William was provincial minister. Further investigation of this subject is needed. Eccleston describes William's work of educational organisation in the following words: "The gift of wisdom so overflowed in the English province, that before the deposition of William of Nottingham there were in England thirty lecturers who solemnly disputed and three or four who lectured without disputation. For he had assigned in the Universities students for each convent, who were to succeed the lecturers when the latter died or were removed."

Friar William's aim was clearly to have a lecturer in every convent and to maintain at the Universities a constant supply of students being trained to succeed the actual

¹Except a sermon on obedience in Pembroke College, Cambridge, MS. 265.

lecturers when the lectureships fell vacant. There were between forty and fifty houses of friars at the time of William's death—so that the majority of them were already supplied with lecturers.

It was perhaps somewhat later, and on the model of the Dominican system, that grades of schools were organised in the Franciscan province: and here the custody becomes an important factor. The convents of a custody were grouped together for educational purposes. The General Constitutions of 1260 include an ordinance that one convent in each custody was to be assigned by the provincial minister, "in which all the novices of the custody shall be collected up to the time of their profession". A decree of the general chapter of 1292 may be brought into connection with this: "the general chapter wills that provincial ministers shall institute schools for arts for the instruction of the youth of the province" (arts meaning grammar and logic). Physics or natural philosophy is to be taught according to a constitution of 1292, but not by the theological lecturer; whether there was a separate school for this study (as was the case in the Dominican Order) is not clear. Then a little later we find a special school of theology in working order in each of the seven custodies-namely at London, York, Norwich, Stamford, Coventry, Exeter and Newcastle.

So we have the following arrangement of schools: (1) a school for the novices in each custody, which is probably identical with the "Arts" school; (2) an ordinary school of theology in every convent; (3) a special school of theology in each custody, with which is probably connected the natural philosophy school; (4) the general school of theology and philosophy at the Universities. In the ordinary course a friar received the elementary education in the novice's school; he then attended lectures on theology in his native convent. If he showed aptitude for study, he went on for two or three years to the special school of his custody; thence the best students passed on to the Universities. After completing their course there, they might either continue to lecture at Oxford or Cambridge, or by command of the general chapter

be sent to Paris, or some other University abroad; or by command of the provincial chapter they might be appointed lecturers in the various convents and special schools of the province. Sometimes they were even secured as lecturers in Benedictine monasteries, as was the case at Canterbury towards the end of the thirteenth century.

It is an interesting question how far these learned friars were able or tried to combine practical pastoral work with their scholastic duties. Was a Doctor of Divinity usually appointed to hear confessions, and if so did it interfere with his work as teacher and writer? Friar John Pecham was lecturer to the friars at Oxford and a most prolific writer on natural science, theology, in defence of his order, and on liturgical subjects. He was also papal penitentiary, and as such he wrote a Formula Confessionum, which is of a thoroughly practical nature; to assist the memory the points in each section are summed up in a verse or two, some of which appear to have been traditional, others original. It is interesting to note that he lays stress on faults to which his own order was liable: "Pride is caused by excess of riches; it is also sometimes caused by voluntary poverty. And mendicant friars often suffer from this form of pride. And some are proud because they wear common clothes and eat coarse food." On the other hand, I will mention a piece of evidence a little later which points in the other direction—namely that the literary life was not compatible with the life of a confessor. In 1300, the provincial minister sent to the bishop of Lincoln the names of twenty-two Oxford friars whom he wished to be licensed as confessors in the diocese. bishop licensed the first eight in the list and struck out the remaining fourteen. Among the first eight there are two Doctors of Divinity, but no one who attained any distinction as a writer (the remaining six were never doctors). Of the rejected, six or seven became subsequently regent doctors of Oxford, and two others regent doctors of Paris, the two latter being Robert Cowton and John Duns Scotus. What would have been the result if the name "Johannes Douns" had been put among the first eight? One may be pretty

sure that his works would not have filled twenty-six volumes.

Preaching was of course an essential part of every theological course. Eccleston, as already mentioned, notes the progress made by Grosseteste's students at Oxford "in the subtle moralities suitable to preaching," as well as in the handling of philosophical questions. And several of the works of John of Wales, sixth master of the Oxford Franciscans, were handbooks for the use of preachers. "Moralities" mean the drawing out of the moral analogies suggested by some fact or supposed fact in natural history or natural science. Many of those who went out to preach (to quote a fine phrase of Pecham's) not like vagabonds as their enemies said, but as "the wheels of the Lord's chariot," derived their learning and their inspiration directly or indirectly from Oxford.

Before concluding I wish to draw attention to one other respect in which the influence of the friars made itself permanently felt in Oxford. There is no doubt that the houses of Dominicans and Franciscans gave the first impetus to the College system: the friaries were in fact the first Colleges. And with the foundation of one College the Franciscans had a close connection—namely Balliol. Sir John de Balliol died in 1269 without having established his house for poor scholars on a permanent footing. His widow Devorguila in 1282 carried out the plan "on the advice of Friar Richard de Slikeburne," her Franciscan confessor. The statutes of the College were addressed to Friar Hugh de Hartlepool, afterwards provincial minister, and Master William Menyl, who as permanent proctors or visitors exercised a general supervision over the College. One of these visitors was always a Franciscan, till the new statutes of the College were made early in the sixteenth century.

A. G. LITTLE.

A FRANCISCAN MYSTIC OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

THE BLESSED ANGELA OF FOLIGNO.1

It is rather a curious fact that in the modern revival of interest in the Franciscan movement, so little attention has been paid to the life and works of Angela of Foligno. Yet, excepting only St. Bonaventura, this woman has probably exerted a more enduring, more far-reaching influence than any other Franciscan of the century which followed the Founder's death.

In saying this, I do not forget the claims of such great Franciscans as John of Parma—of Jacopone da Todì—or, of course, of St. Clare, the Founder of the Second Order. the influence of John of Parma was comparatively lived; and that of Jacopone's superb poetry, though great in Italy, did not go beyond it. His ecstacies could not be translated into other tongues. As to St. Clare, with whom the feminine aspect of the Franciscan ideal first showed itself, her vocation was to the foundation of a contemplative order, which should support by its heavenly correspondences the active and missionary life of the Franciscan friars. business of the Second Order is the essential woman's business, of keeping the fire of love alight upon the hearth. influence, therefore, was—and is—almost entirely confined within the boundaries of the spiritual family. The deepest wells of Franciscan mysticism are there hidden, and must always be hidden, from the outer world.

But the vocation of Angela of Foligno was, in a sense, more thoroughly Franciscan than this, more broadly human,

¹ Paper read before the British Society of Franciscan Studies. 15 Nov., 1911.

more complete. Like that of St. Catherine of Genoa, a mystic whom she resembles in certain respects, it was a two-fold vocation—to the eternal and to the temporal, to the divine and to the human. She was a great contemplative, but she was also an exceedingly successful teacher of the secrets of spiritual life: one of the great line of artist-mediators between the Infinite and the human mind.

We know nothing of St. Clare's mystical experience. We know of Angela's all that she was able to express-and she tried very hard, though for want of language she confesses that she often failed. This passionate, faulty, very human woman, who came to the Mystic Way from a disorderly life, and was hampered by a natural egotism which she transmuted, it is true, but never perhaps really killed, has earned the great title of "Mistress of Theologians". She penetrated to that world of realities which the diagrams of theology, like the temple built with hands, foreshadow upon earth. Her book of visions and revelations, now so little read, profoundly affected the religious life of Europe. During the sixteenth and the seventeenth century we often come upon its traces in England and in France, as well as in Italy itself; for in this period it was one of the most widely circulated religious works. It exerted great influence on St. Francis de Sales, and also upon the French Quietists. quoted as an authority by Madame Guyon, Poiret, and Malaval; and through the great English Benedictine Augustine Baker and his pupil Gertrude More, it has left its mark on English Catholic mysticism of the seventeenth century.1

This book is practically our only trustworthy source for the facts of Angela's inner and outer life. It was written in Latin at her dictation, by her Franciscan confessor Fra Arnaldo; but was not printed till the sixteenth century, when first an Italian translation, and then the Latin text appeared. Both soon became popular: the translation being one of the

¹ Compare St. Francis de Sales, Traité de l'Amour de Dieu; Madame Guyon, Vie par Elle-Même; Poiret, Bibliotheca Mysticorum; Malaval, La Pratique de la Vraie Théologie Mystique; Augustine Baker, Holy Wisdom.

first Italian books of devotion to appear in the vulgar tongue.1

It is divided into three separate parts; which, if we are to understand Angela, must be read in relation with one another. First we have the history of her conversion, penitence, and slow difficult education in the Mystic Way—a psychological document of great value. Secondly, we have, grouped together, all the visions and revelations which she received in that way. Unfortunately Fra Arnaldo has seen fit to arrange these according to their subjects, and not according to the order in which they were experienced: thereby increasing their edifying character at the expense of their scientific worth. Last comes "the evangelical doctrine of the Blessed Angela"—a treatise largely made up of letters addressed to her disciples, but, like the writings of St. Teresa, full of illuminating autobiographical touches.

Here, then, we have in one volume three aspects of human life as seen within the limits of one personality—the biographical facts, the supernal vision, and the ordered conclusions, drawn from those facts and that vision, for the instruction of other men.

What, then, is the personality of the woman; what are the circumstances of her life, as revealed to us in this book? We shall never understand her as a mystic unless we try first to understand her as a human creature.

First as to her outward life. Angela was born of a prosperous Umbrian family in 1248—twenty-two years after the death of St. Francis, seventeen years before the birth of

¹The first Latin edition, Libellus spiritualis doctrine ac multiplicium visionum et consolationum divinarum Angele de Fulginio was printed, probably at Venice, c. 1510. The oldest extant edition of the Italian, Libro utile e devoto nel quale si contiene la conversione i pententia tentatione dottrina visioni e divine consolationi della Beata Angela de Foligni novamente tradutto de latine in lingua volgare, is dated 1536. The Latin was again published in Paris 1598, under its generally known title of B. Angelae de Fulginio Visionum et Instructionum liber. It was reprinted at Cologne, 1601 and is included in the Acta SS.

1. January. A good modern edition is by Faloci Pulignani, Foligno, 1899. The best English translation is from the Italian; The Divine Consolations of the Blessed Angela of Foligno, trans. by M. Steegman with introduction by Algar Thorold. (New Mediaeval Library, 1909.)

Dante. She was one year younger than St. Margaret of Cortona, the other great Franciscan penitent and contemplative. She married whilst still very young, and had children; but lived not only a worldly but also, if we trust her own statements, an actually immoral life. The unregenerate Angela in early womanhood was not the kind of person whom one would pick out as likely to develop into a saint. She makes it quite clear to us that she was a vain, self-important, and hypocritical little egotist. She loved to make a good impression: she hated to put herself in the wrong. There was an offensive sanctimoniousness about her too. "During the whole of my life," she says frankly, "I have studied how that I might obtain the fame of sanctity."

We do not know the date at which Angela's conversion took place, or the circumstances which brought it about. If one might make a guess, one would say that it probably occurred about her thirtieth year—a very common period for the mystical disposition to show itself—and that it originated in disillusion, that unfailing spur of the born romantic. It took place under Franciscan influence; which was of course paramount in that part of Umbria in her day. The earliest of her visionary experiences was a dream in which St. Francis appeared to her; and her confessor was a Friar Minor. After conversion she took the habit of a Tertiary, and remained faithful to the Order till her death.

The fixed dates in her life are few and confusing. Her own book only gives two: the date of her final purification and the date of her death. About 1284, when she was thirty-six years old, she was already known and deeply respected as a spiritual teacher by Ubertino da Casale—then a young man of twenty-five. She was then living a strict religious life in great poverty, and seems to have been the centre of a group of Franciscan tertiaries of both sexes for whom she was at once friend and prophetess, like St. Catherine of Siena in the next century. Several of her letters to these "sons" of hers are embedded in her book of "Evangelical Doctrine". Apparently soon after 1290 she formed a sisterhood at Foligno. Her sisters took the Rule of the Third Order and also

the three vows of religion, but they were not cloistered. They devoted themselves to the care of the sick, and other works of charity. With them Angela spent her last years. She died, surrounded by her spiritual children, in the octave of the Feast of the Holy Innocents, 1309, aged sixty-one; and was buried in the Church of the Franciscans at Foligno, where her body still lies. An Office in her honour was approved by Gregory XIV. in 1701; and her Feast is kept throughout the Franciscan Order on 30 March.

So much for the scanty outer history. Now for the inner life: the real life of mystics and contemplatives. There are plenty of indications that Angela was of the stuff of which great mystics are made—though not at all of the stuff of which many amateurs of mysticism expect them to be made.

First great necessity, she possessed a strongly romantic temperament; like Francis, Suso, Ignatius, Mechthild, Teresa, her companions on the great adventure of the soul. Like these, she had also a latent simplicity and ardour, a mingling of the child-like and the heroic—for it is heroic to begin as a comfortable and self-indulgent married woman, and end alone on Sinai, however many tumbles you may have upon the road. With this she combined an extreme sensibility to impressions, great power of endurance, a strong will—all the potentialities of a great sinner or a great saint. Further, she evidently possessed that peculiar, unstable psychic make up, which the mystic shares with other types of genius; and which is seen in its highest development in the two greatest of Italian saints, Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena.

We know that this psychic make up, this peculiar mystic temperament, develops in a certain way: passing through the stages which have been called by ascetic writers the Way of Purgation, the Way of Illumination, and the Way of Union. These names are probably familiar to all of us: but as they correspond to actual psychological states as well as to spiritual ideas, it may be worth while to consider them for a moment. We see, by countless examples, that when the kind of spiritual consciousness which we call "mystical" first appears in an individual, its normal result is to cast an

abrupt and vivid light upon that person's sins and imperfections. In the bright light of a reality which is apprehended as goodness and beauty as well as truth, all evil and ugliness become vividly apparent. The mystic has seen perfection; and can never again be satisfied with imperfection. The Mystic Way, then, begins in this self-knowledge and the eagerness for improvement, or *penitence* it induces: and its first stage—the Way of Purgation—is spent in the hard struggle to transmute and re-make character in conformity with the divine vision abruptly seen at the time of conversion.

But, as against this natural negative sense of personal unworthiness, the mystic has a positive spiritual sense of Divine Love and Perfection; a power of apprehending absolute reality. Because he sways easily, like all artists, between enthusiasm and depression, glimpses of this vision come to him very often between his trials and penances. When these trials are at an end, when his faults are conquered, and the vision is established as a part of his normal consciousness, he is said to have reached the "Illuminative Way". From this he may pass through other and fiercer struggles, by renunciations impossible to common men, to the highest and most perfect state of correspondence with the Divine World, which mystical writers called the Unitive Way.

The Mystic Way, then, is the gradual growth of an entirely new life, an entirely new kind of consciousness, in the individual—the life which is related to eternal realities: and this growth involves the killing out of all those imperfect and self-regarding elements of character which conflict with that new consciousness. This was the way that Angela of Foligno followed; and we shall perhaps understand her spiritual adventures better if we keep in mind the rough diagram of normal spiritual growth which I have suggested to you.

"As I walked," said the Blessed Angela, "by the way of penitence, I took eighteen spiritual steps before I came to know the imperfections of my life." This is the first sentence of the "Book of her Conversion and Penitence". Those "eighteen steps" extended over many years. When they be-

gan, Angela was living luxuriously, as a married woman, in When they ended, she was a poor her husband's house. widow vowed to the religious life, stripped of every superfluity, everything that could entangle her in the web of appearance, apt in contemplation, companioned by visions, esteemed as a teacher and an ecstatic, and the centre of a group of disciples. Her inner life, during these years of ascent, of hard and difficult growth, seems to have been a life of bitter and almost continuous struggle. Even after the preliminary steps of repentance were over, and her visionary powers had developed, the new spiritual ideals and the old worldly instincts lived for years side by side in her consciousness. We see her, as we read the wonderful memoirs of her years of penitence, perpetually flung to and fro between those old tendencies and those new ideals, between adoration and contrition; as first one element and then the other of her complex personality took the upper hand. In her long and slow ascent towards the stars, she alternately experienced the sunshine and the shade.

From the turmoil which surrounded the hard re-making of Angela's character, there emerged two great principles round which her subsequent life and teaching were to be grouped. The first was poverty, the second was self-knowledge. Naturally her instinct for poverty would be fostered by her Franciscan confessor: but it is an instinct implicit in the mystical temperament, and not peculiar to the Poor Man of Assisi. Mystics know that possessions dissipate the energy which they need for other and more real things—that they must give up ownership, the verb "to have," if they are to attain the freedom which they seek, and all the fullness of the verb "to be". It cost Angela many struggles before she accepted and acted upon this truth, and attained what she calls the "liberty of poverty".

Self-knowledge, which Richard of St. Victor, and afterwards St. Catherine of Siena, made the starting-point of all mysticism, was seen by the clear-sighted Angela to be the true objective towards which her hard penances and long meditations must tend.

The eighteen "steps," then, exhibit with extraordinary honesty her gradual progress in these two arts of selfknowledge and renunciation. At the first step, as we have seen, she was by something-we know not what-startled into attention to the real. At the second, she makes a general confession of her sins to a Franciscan friar. determines to perform his penance, and becomes increasingly contrite for her imperfections. By the eighth step, this contrition has become love; the passion for perfection triumphing over the hatred of imperfection. Angela is then definitely committed to the Mystic Way. "I burned with the fire of love"... she says, "and the aforesaid fire compelled me and I had no power to resist." At the ninth step, the instinct for renunciation shows itself; still, however, quaintly mixed with the vanity, self-importance and narrow egotism of the old Angela. This is the one passage in all her writings which every one knows, and by which she is generally-and most unfairly—judged.

"I elected to walk on the thorny path which is the path of tribulation. So I began to put aside the fine clothing and adornments which I had, and the most delicate food, and also the covering of my head. But as yet, to do all these things was hard, and shamed me, because I did not feel much love for God, and was living with my husband. So that it was a bitter thing to me when anything offensive was said or done to me; but I bore it as patiently as I could. In that time, and by God's will, there died my mother, who was a great hindrance to me in following the way of God; my husband died likewise; and in a short time there also died all my children. And because I had begun to follow the aforesaid way, and had prayed God to rid me of them, I had great consolation of their deaths, although I also felt some grief." 1

This unfortunate paragraph outweighs for many minds the whole of Angela's subsequent life and achievements. I do not deny that, taken alone, it is a monument of spiritual egotism. But we must remember that it represents, not

¹ B. Angelae de Fulginio, Visionum et Instructionum Liber, cap. ix. (Eng. translation, p. 5.)

Angela the peaceful mystic, but Angela the worried and storm-tossed penitent; living in a thoroughly discordant, thoroughly unspiritual environment, maddened by the difficulties of her position, knowing that the ascetic life was her only hope; but hemmed in on all sides by conventional existence and unsympathetic surroundings.

Further, it is written by one who had long out-lived the natural human sorrow which, as she says here and in another place, she felt at these accumulated bereavements. Now, looking back, and seeing her past existence spread out before her, she recognises even this awful and drastic series of deprivations as a necessary factor in the life to which she was called.

After all, we may as well be fair, and acknowledge that family affection is not the strongest point in the character of the mystical saints. In the interests of their vocation, they are always ready to leave father, mother, brothers and sisters; and moreover there is evangelical authority for this attitude.1 They are specialists, and are therefore bound, in the interests of the race, to give up many things which other men must develop and preserve. Artists are under much the same necessity. The vitality which we diffuse amongst many interests and loves, these must concentrate on the one object of their quest. Hence St. Francis himself flung his family aside without scruple when it came to the parting of the ways. Angela was only following in his footsteps; though she doubtless expressed herself with unnecessary and ill-regulated vigour.

It was after her release from the duties of family life, and her more complete concentration on the ascetic life, that her visionary powers began to develop. At first they were of rather an ordinary kind; imaginary pictures of the Passion, the Crucifix, the Sacred Heart, such as have been experienced by innumerable Catholic saints. These vivid symbolic presentations of Divine love moved Angela to greater and more heroic heights of penitential love; and the passion for poverty came on her with renewed force.

¹ Luke xiv. 27.

Her possessions enchained her, and she knew it. She made many efforts to screw herself up bit by bit to those heights of renunciation which St. Francis appears to have reached almost without effort.

"For this cause—namely to have the liberty of poverty— I journeyed to Rome, to pray the Blessed Peter that he would obtain for me the grace of true poverty. It seemed to me at last that I could not sufficiently do penance whilst I was possessed of worldly things . . . I determined to forsake everything. In my imagination I had a great desire to become poor, and such was my zeal, that I often feared to die before I attained this state of poverty. On the other hand, I was assailed by temptations, which whispered to me that I was still young, that begging for alms might lead me into shame and danger; that if I did this, I should die of hunger, cold, and nakedness. Moreover all my friends dissuaded me from But at last divine mercy sent a great illlumination into my heart, which, as I believed then and do now, I shall never lose even in eternity. . . . So then I did resolve in good earnest."1

Here is the final, deliberate act of will: the turning once for all from the unreal to the real—under whatever form the charms of unreality appear to the growing self—which all mystics have to make. It is Angela's eleventh step. Her mystical powers were now developing rapidly. They showed themselves in visions, in dreams, in ecstacies, in deep and vivid intuitions of spiritual realities, which came to her more and more frequently.

At the fifteenth step, with truly Franciscan thoroughness—though oddly enough the Brothers Minor whom she consulted forbade her to do it—she distributed the whole of her possessions amongst the poor. "Because methought I could not keep anything for myself without greatly offending Him who did thus enlighten me."

With this crucial act she seems to have attained at last the true and full state of Illumination. "Then," she says,

¹ Op. cit., cap. xx. (Eng. trans. p. 159.)

"I began to feel the sweetness of God in my heart "—what other mystics have called the "sense of the presence". Also, "I began to have understanding of the visions and the words"—a new spiritual lucidity running side by side with the symbolic pictures and imaginary voices that she saw and heard with the inner eye and ear. This, too, is normal and characteristic. From this point, then, we must read the book of "Visions and Consolations" side by side with the book of "Penances" if we would understand Angela's inner life: for these two forms of experience, which she has unfortunately chosen to treat separately, alternated with one another.

In the time we are now considering—the time of her acceptance of holy poverty—she seems to have been living in a state of almost hermit-like simplicity, with one companion, the Blessed Paschalina of Foligno; whom at first she found a "weariness," but afterwards discovered to be a fellow traveller on the Mystic Way. Angela was already accepted reverenced, indeed celebrated—as a religious teacher. Definitely vowed to the service of the Franciscan Order, she seems, like St. Catherine of Siena, St. Catherine of Genoa, and many other women mystics, to have been the centre of a group of adoring disciples; of whom Ubertino da Casale was probably one. Yet her inner life was still in a state of the utmost confusion. The remaking of her character was still in progress. She was flung perpetually to the extremes of joy and anguish. She would rise to great heights of mystical passion, only to fall back to all her old temptations. Also the great strain put upon her nervous system by the growing spiritual faculties resulted in absolute physical illness, as has been the case with so many of the mystical saints. "The torments of my body," she says, "were veritably numberless. . . . There remained not one of my members that was not grievously tormented, nor was I ever free from pain, infirmity, or weariness."

All these things happened, she says, in order that she might not feel exalted by the greatness and number of her

¹ Op. cit., caps. xvii. and xviii. (Eng. trans. p. 12.)

revelations, visions, and conversations with God. Moreover, she discloses in some of her letters with a naïve candour how she was still sometimes unable to live up to her own high ascetic ideals: how she exhorted her disciples to virtues which she was not strong enough to practise herself. "I caused it to be told to those who were bidden to my house that I ate neither fish nor meat; being the while full of greediness, gluttony and drunkenness." "I diligently made an outward show of being poor, but I caused many sheets and coverings to be put where I lay down to sleep, and had them removed in the morning so that none might see them".1

Then, clearly aware of her own weakness and hypocrisy, she would suffer agonies of contrition: the better side of her nature took command, and she confessed to her disciples with transparent candour their teacher's unworthiness.

Those familiar with the lives of the mystics will remember many parallels to this state of conflict: the ups and downs of Suso-his alternate illumination and despair, his great self-denials balanced by foolish little sins: the thirty years during which Teresa-already, like Angela, regarded as a great example—swayed between her mystical vocation and the claims of a more normal life. In Angela this long inward battle culminated, she says, "some little while before the time of the pontificate of Celestino "-that is to say about 1294, when she was forty-six—in a state of acute misery and torment, answering to that terrible period of final purification which other mystics have called the Dark Night of the Soul.2 This crisis, in which she suffered both bodily and mental agony, and was even humiliated by recurrent temptations to all her old vices, lasted for two years. Her intellect was often so clouded that she could not even recall the idea of God to her mind. It was her last lesson in humility and self-knowledge-an excellent antidote to the dangers of professional sanctity.

From this last purification, in which all the elements of her character seemed flung back into the melting-pot, she

¹ Op. cit., cap. xix. (Eng. trans. p. 19.) ² Ibid. (Eng. trans. p. 22.)

emerged into that condition of spiritual equilibrium, of perfect harmony with transcendent reality, which is known to mystic writers as the Unitive Way. "A divine change," she says, "took place in my soul, which neither saint nor angel could describe or explain. Wherefore I say again that it seems to me evil speaking or blasphemy if I try to tell of it." 1 Again, "I came not to this state of my own self, but was led and drawn thereto by God; so that though of my own self I should not have known how to desire or ask for it, I am now in that state continually". Though the capacity for pain never left her, and is implied in many of her greatest revelations—for, like all the great Catholic mystics, she found the Christian paradox of joyous suffering at the very centre of truth—yet the last twelve years of her life seem to have been years of profound inward peace. "He hath placed within my soul," she said, "a state which changes little, and I possess God in such fullness that I am no longer in the state in which I used to be; but I walk in such perfect peace of heart and mind that I am content in all things." 2

Now Angela has two claims to the title of a great mystic—that of her life, which we have briefly considered, and that of the revelations and experiences which she reports. What then was the nature of these visions and revelations?—our chief evidence of the unique nature of her consciousness. There are signs in her book that she ran through the whole gamut of mystical experience. She practised, and described, all those degrees of contemplative prayer which are analysed by St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. She heard interior voices. She saw visions. She was an ecstatic.

Her ecstacies were of that rare and supernal kind which, far from being signs of mental or nervous disease, actually renew and invigorate the physical life of those who experience them. You will remember the beautiful passage in which St. Catherine of Genoa is described as coming joyous and rosy-faced from the ecstatic encounter with Love. So Angela says:—

¹ Op. cit., cap. xxvii. (Eng. trans. p. 187.)
² Ibid. (Eng. trans. p. 205.)

"Because of the change in my body, therefore I was not able to conceal my state from my companion, or from other people with whom I consorted: because at times my face was all resplendent and rosy and my eyes shone like candles. When the soul is assured of God and refreshed by His presence, the body also receives health, satisfaction and nobility." 1

Her visions were of two kinds. First we have a long series of "imaginary visions": pictures, no doubt representing deep and imageless intuitions, resulting as it were from some communion with reality, but taking their form—as distinct from their content—from the memory and imagination of the visionary. These are not mere day dreams, but definite experiences—seen, as she says, with the eyes of the mind far more clearly than anything can be seen with the eyes of the body. Nevertheless we are bound to consider them less as objective revelations than as vivid artistic reconstructions—symbols of something she has felt and known. Angela's religious beliefs and romantic leanings are both clearly reflected in them. Many deal with the Passion; others are inspired by her devotion to the Eucharist. One or two seem, like the visions of St. Gertrude, to anticipate the later cult of the Sacred Heart. In virtue of these visions she belongs to the great family of women Catholic mystics; women possessing a rich emotional life, and, largely by means of that emotional life, obtaining and expressing their communion with the spiritual world.

We see this clearly in one of Angela's most celebrated experiences; the one of all others which seems to have set the seal on her career as a religious teacher, and which is placed at the beginning of her book of visions and revelations, though there was no vision involved in it. I mean the beautiful scene in which she talked with the Holy Ghost, walking on "the narrow road which leadeth upward to Assisi, and is beyond Spello". That sense of heavenly intimacy, of divine communion, of a destiny pressed upon her from the spiritual sphere, which then took possession of her consciousness, was translated by the surface-mind of the natural Angela—whose

¹ Op. cit., cap. lii. (Eng. trans. p. 28.)

nearest parallels to such an experience were found amongst the emotional incidents of human love—into the wonderful imaginary conversation in which, as she climbs the path between the vineyards, she is wooed by the Holy Spirit, and assured of His peculiar interest and affection. "I will bear thee company and speak with thee all the way," He says to her. "I will make no end to My speaking, and thou wilt not be able to attend to anything save Me." "Then did He begin to speak the following words to me, which persuaded me to love after this manner, 'My daughter, who art sweet to Me, My daughter who art My temple, My beloved daughter, do thou love Me, for I love thee greatly, and much more than thou lovest Me'.

"And very often He said to me, Bride and daughter! sweet art thou to Me; I love thee better than any other in the valley of Spoleto". These and other similar things did He say to me. Then when I heard these words, I counted my sins, and I considered my faults; how that I was unworthy of so great a love. And I began to doubt these words; for which cause, my soul said to Him who had spoken to it, 'If thou wert indeed the Holy Spirit, thou wouldst not speak thus; for it is not right or proper, because I am weak and frail and might grow vainglorious thereat'. He answered, 'Think and see if thou couldst become vainglorious because of the things for which thou art now made glad. . . .' Then I tried to grow vainglorious, that I might prove if He spoke truth; and I began to look at the vineyards, that I might learn the folly of my words. And wherever I looked, He said to me, 'Behold and see! this is My creation': and at this I felt ineffable delight."1

This is the poetry of mysticism: an artistic reduction of supernal intuitions: and is to be interpreted in poetic terms.

But there is another, and rarer, form of spiritual perception—that imageless intuition of pure truth, which St. Teresa and other mystics call *intellectual*, but which would be better named *metaphysical* vision. Angela's real importance amongst mystics came from the fact that she possessed this

¹ Op. cit. cap. xx. (Eng. trans. p. 160.)

power in a high degree of development. In virtue of her immediate apprehensions of transcendent reality, she belongs to the rarest and highest type of mystic seer—a class in which Plotinus holds perhaps the first place, and of which Ruysbroeck is the most conspicuous mediaeval example. There are indications in the poetry of Jacopone da Todi that he too knew, either directly or by the report of other adventurers, something of those strange astounding regions, "beyond the polar circle of the mind," where Angela tasted of unconditioned reality. Jacopone was, of course, Angela's contemporary; she outlived him by only three years; and it is an interesting question whether these two great Franciscans may or may not have influenced one another.

There are eight of these great visionary experiences recorded in Angela's book. In them she says that she apprehended God successively under the attributes of Goodness, Beauty, Power, Wisdom, Love, Justice; and that after this she beheld the totality of the Godhead "darkly"—a way of describing her perceptions which is of course traceable to the "Divine Darkness" of Dionysius the Areopagite. Finally she beheld it, "as clearly as is possible in this life". All these visions seem to have come to her when she was in a state of ecstasy or trance. She speaks of being "exalted in spirit," "rapt to the first elevation"—lifted to wholly new levels of consciousness. She describes them as well as she can; yet plainly she is only able to tell us a fraction of her experience. Over and over again she declares the hopeless inadequacy of human speech, the impossibility of "speaking as she saw". Her state is like that of Dante at the end of the Paradiso—save that her wings were fitted for these flights.

"I beheld the ineffable fullness of God; but I can relate nothing of it, save that I have *seen* the fullness of divine wisdom, wherein is all goodness."

Again, "inasmuch as this was a supernatural thing, I cannot express it in words". "Many other things were clearly set forth to me; but I neither can nor will relate

¹ See especially Lauda 91 (Laude di frate Jacopone da Todi. Società Filologica Romana, Roma, 1910.)

them." "All that I say of this, seems to me to be nothing. I feel as though I offended in speaking of it, for so greatly does the good exceed all my words that my speech seems to be but blasphemy." 1

Those things, however, which she does contrive to relate, have an astonishing suggestive quality, a great philosophic sweep, combined with an intimate appeal to our own deepest intuitions, which place them, so far as mystical history is concerned, on a level with some of the greatest passages in Ruysbroeck; and in my opinion far beyond the more celebrated intellectual visions of St. Teresa.

I give one or two extracts from this set of visions :-

"The eyes of my soul were opened and I beheld the plenitude of God, by which I understood the whole world, both here and beyond the sea, the Abyss, and all other things. And in this I beheld nothing save the Divine Power, in a way that is utterly indescribable, so that through the greatness of its wonder the soul cried with a loud voice, saying, 'The whole world is full of God'. Wherefore I understood that the world is but a little thing; and I saw that the power of God was above all things and the whole world was filled with it."

You will remember Julian of Norwich—" He showed me a little thing, the quantity of an hazel nut. I looked thereon with the eye of my understanding and thought, What may this be? and it was answered generally thus: It is all that is made."

"After I had seen the power of God, His will and His justice, I was lifted higher still, and then I no longer beheld the power and will as before. But I beheld a *Thing*, as fixed and stable as it was indescribable; and more than this I cannot say, save that I have often said already, namely, that it was all good. And although my soul beheld not love, yet when it saw that indescribable *Thing*, it was itself filled with indescribable joy, and it was taken out of the state it was in before, and placed in this great and ineffable state. I know not whether I was then in the body or out of the body.

¹ Op. cit., cap. xxiii. and xxvi. (Eng. trans. pp. 174, 184.)

It is enough to say that all the other visions seemed to me less great than this."

Again, "One time in Lent . . . the eyes of my soul were opened, and I saw Love advancing gently towards me, and I saw the beginning but not the end. There seemed to me only a continuation and an eternity thereof; so that I cannot tell its likeness nor colour; but directly this Love reached me I beheld all these things more clearly with the eyes of the soul than I could do with the eyes of the body. Love came towards me after the manner of a sickle. that there was any actual and measureable likeness; but when first it appeared to me it did not give itself to me in such abundance as I expected, but a part was withdrawn. Therefore I say, after the manner of a sickle. Then I was filled with love and a great satisfaction, but although it satisfied me, it generated within me so great a hunger that all my members were loosened; and my soul fainted with longing to attain to the All." 1

I give one more—particularly interesting to English students because of its parallels with our own great mystical work, *The Cloud of Unknowing:*—

"There was a time when my soul was exalted to behold God with so much clearness that never before had I beheld Him so distinctly. But I did not here see Love so fully; rather I lost that which I had before, and was left without Afterwards I saw Him darkly, and this darkness was the greatest blessing that could be imagined, and thought can conceive nothing equal to this. . . . Here likewise I see all Good. . . . The soul delights unspeakably therein, yet it beholds nothing that can be spoken by the tongue or conceived by the heart. It sees nothing yet sees all, because it beholds the Good darkly; and the more darkly and secretly the Good is seen, the more certain it is, and excellent above all things. Wherefore all other good that can be seen or imagined is doubtless less than this, and even when the soul sees the divine wisdom, power and will of God (which I have seen marvellously at other times), it is all less than this most

¹ Op. cit., cap. xxii., xxiv., xxv. (Eng. trans. pp. 172, 176, 178.)

certain Good. Because this is the whole, and those other things are but part of the whole. . . . But seen thus darkly, the Good brings no smile to the lips, no fervour of love to the heart; for the body does not tremble or become moved and distressed as at other times; because the soul sees, and not the body, which rests and sleeps, and the tongue is dumb and speechless. All the many ineffable kindnesses which God has shown me, all the sweet words and divine sayings and doings, are so much less than this that I saw in the darkness, that I put no hope in them. . . . But to this most high power of beholding God ineffably through great darkness, my spirit was uplifted three times only and no more."

"When I behold and am in that Good," she says again, "although I seem to see nothing, yet I see all things." This is like the ascent of Plotinus in ecstasy to the One; which also, as he tells us, was only granted to him three times. Angela here touches the limit of human experience of the Absolute.

It is impossible in this short paper to draw attention to the many parallels which her work presents with that of other great mystics—with our own Richard Rolle of Hampole, Julian of Norwich, and the nameless writer of the *Cloud of Unknowing*—with St. Mechthild of Hackeborn, Ruysbroeck, St. Catherine of Genoa, St. Teresa. All these speak the same language, for all come back to us from the same country. But few have there made more profound and strange explorations than this obscure Franciscan mystic—this faulty woman slowly schooled to the purposes of Truth.

I have called her a Franciscan mystic. If by Franciscan mysticism we mean that exquisite sense of the divine immanence in nature, that poetic temperament, that peculiar and elusive charm, which we associate with St. Francis himself—then, perhaps, there is little that is characteristically Francis-

¹ Op. cit., cap. xxiv. (Eng. trans., p. 181.) "This cloud," says The Cloud of Unknowing, "is evermore between thee and thy God... therefore shape thyself to abide in this darkness so long as thou mayest, evermore crying after Him whom thou lovest, for if ever thou shalt feel Him or see Him (in such sort as He may be seen or felt in this life) it behoveth always to be in this cloud or darkness."

can in Angela. But if by Franciscanism we mean rather—as I think we should—the recapturing and making available for life of the primitive Christian secret of spiritual freedom; that romance of heroic and eager suffering co-existing with exultant joy; then I think that we may see in her one of the links by which that secret has been transmitted to the modern world.

EVELYN UNDERHILL.

UBERTINO DA CASALE.1

A CURT and unfavourable allusion in the *Paradiso* ² gives the modern reader no clue to the character of Ubertino da Casale, who in his own day was renowned alike as a mystical writer and as a champion of the "Spiritual" Franciscans, but who until recently has been comparatively little studied.

Born some six years before Dante, and composing his chief work, the Arbor Vitæ Crucifixæ, in 1305, when the poet was still engaged on his Divina Commedia, Ubertino had much in common with him: both hoped for a reform of the Church from within; both looked on the luxury of the age as a main cause of its evils; both protested against the unscrupulous character and policy of Boniface VIII. Various allusions in the Commedia are links with Ubertino; one passage is directly borrowed from his Arbor, for Dante, as Tocco³ and Knaus 4 have shown, knew Ubertino's writings well. Yet, in spite of all this, he seems to have known very little of the man himself,5 and that little was probably derived from the via media party in the Franciscan Order, which in the preceding century had been so skilfully led by that very St. Bonaventura into whose mouth the disparaging allusion of the Paradiso is put. This party would be hostile to Ubertino, who carried on the traditions of Brother Leo and the early Zelanti, and waged a lifelong struggle to maintain the absolute

¹ Reprinted, with some additions, from *The Franciscan Monthly*, by the Editor's courteous permission.

² XII. 124-6. Ma non fia da Casal, nè d' Acquasparta Là onde vegnon tali alla scrittura Che l' un la fugge e l' altro la coarta.

³ Dante e l' Eresia, p. 27.

⁴ Dante, Sein Leben und sein Werk, pp. 444, 738, 745, etc.

⁵ Davidsohn, Geschichte von Florenz (1908), Vol. II. part ii. p. 276, argues that Dante and Ubertino were personally known to each other, and this view is held by Fr. Callaey, Eiude sur Ubertin de Casale, p. 13.

and literal poverty enjoined by St. Francis on his followers, in the teeth of all attempts on the part of leaders of the Order to relax it. Such uncompromising fidelity to their ideal and that of the Founder, together with their Joachimist leanings, involved Ubertino and his friends in unpopularity, persecution and accusations of heresy—accusations which, as he passionately exclaimed, "are unto us bitterer than death". Dante's reference, curt as it is, does indicate Ubertino's position of leadership, as do the contemporary records of friend and foe alike; he was a leader of a far higher type than the political Prelate, Matteo d' Acquasparta, with whom Dante brackets him, and of whom he shows equal disapproval.

Our knowledge of Ubertino's early life is derived mainly from the Prologue to his Arbor, and from personal allusions scattered throughout it (these are given in more compendious and accessible form by Wadding 2); of his polemical career, from the contemporary Chronica Tribulationum 3 of his friend Angelo da Clareno, from Papal Bulls, and from Franciscan historians such as Glassberger and the unknown author of the Chronica XXIV Generalium, 5 compiled probably before 1369. His character is variously given according to the side taken by each writer in the contest between the "Spirituals" and the "Conventuals". One may discount alike exaggerated abuse and exaggerated eulogy, and see in Ubertino a man whose personal sanctity and learning were admitted by his opponents, but who was impetuous, indiscreet and fanatical, carried away by mystic dreams, embittered by persecution, yet withal passionately loyal. His honesty cannot be doubted; it was left to Papini, in the early nineteenth century, to make an ingeniously malicious attempt to discredit it, but this attempt has been sufficiently exposed and refuted by Sabatier, the RR. PP. Civezza and Domenichelli and others.

¹ Acquasparta was in Florence as Papal Legate in 1300 and 1301. Villani, Chron. Fior. viii. 40.

² Annales, Vol. V. pp. 417-8.

³ Published in part by Ehrle, Archiv für Litteratur und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters, Vol. II., and in part by Tocco, Le Due prime Tribolazioni Roma, 1908.

⁴ In Analecta Franciscana, Vol. II. ⁵ Ibid. Vol. III.

No work of which Ubertino is the main theme has appeared in English, but two excellent monographs in German and one in French have been recently published.¹

Ubertino was born in 1259 at Casali, in the Diocese of Vercelli. He entered the Franciscan Order at the age of fourteen. Beginning as a student of philosophy, he believed himself led by Christ Himself to cast it aside, and devoted himself to an earnest study of His earthly life and Passion, associating each day of the week with some event in them; 2 these devotions were the germ of the Arbor. He gained some fame in lecturing and preaching, and spent nine years in Paris, where he held a lectureship. But all the time he was tormented by consciousness of sin. In his twenty-fifth year he returned to Italy, and came under the influence of the saintly Angela of Foligno,3 through whom he may be said to have been "converted". No one, he says, who saw the change in him then could doubt that the Spirit of Christ was born anew in him, he became a new man. Shortly after, he resolved to devote himself entirely to preaching, and preached at Perugia and elsewhere with great effect.

About this time (1285) he found himself at Greccio, the little hermitage near Rieti where St. Francis had introduced the first "Presepio," or Christmas Crib, in church. Here he met John of Parma, the veteran champion of the Strict Observance, the ex-Minister-General of the Order who had "seemed a second Francis," who had been dismissed to an honourable exile at Greccio by the party of St. Bonaventura.

¹ Ubertin von Casale. Dr. J. C. Huck. Freiburg, 1903. Ubertino von Casale. Dr. E. Knoth. Marburg, 1903. L'Idéalisme Franciscdin Spirituel au xive Siècle. Etude sur Ubertin de Casale. Frédégand Callaey, O.M. Cap. Louvain, 1911.

² Father Callaey regards this method of meditation as characteristic of the Spirituals generally and adds (op. cit. p. 6): "Comme chez le poverello, leur maître, le désir ardent de s'identifier avec le Christ y prédomine. Mais sa manière simple et naturelle en est absente. Ces moines ne méditent pas comme lui, d'après l'inspiration du moment, mais d'après un plan soigneusement tracé d'avance."

³ For Angela of Foligno, see *Mysticism*, by Evelyn Underhill (1911) passim, and her Essay in this volume. This experience of Ubertino's was probably his introduction to "the Mystic Way".

To him the young Ubertino made his confession, while, weeping and "looking into his angelic face," he poured out his grief and perplexity over the relaxations in their Rule, "because both the rulers of the Church and the rulers of the Order alike do not only tolerate this laxness of living, but do even impose it". John spoke calmly and reassuringly, promising that God would speedily direct him. Thus cheered, Ubertino took his way to the Portiuncula at Assisi, and his reference to its famous Indulgence is all the more valuable for being incidental and without motive.

During his subsequent travels in Tuscany, Ubertino met a humble saint, mentioned by Dante, Peter the Combmaker (*Pectenarius*) of Siena. His fellow-citizen Sapia tells us ²—

> ... a memoria m' ebbe Pier Pettignano in sue sante orazioni.

This Peter was a Franciscan Tertiary, who gave all his goods to the poor, tended them in hospital, and was looked on as a prophet and healer; his cultus dates from his death in 1328. It was during this same period that Ubertino made the acquaintance of Peter John Olivi,3 his "dearest brother," who fostered his mystical bent, and whose teaching he was so often to defend in after life. Olivi was born in 1248 at Sérignan in Languedoc, and became the leader of the "Spiritual" party in the South of France, writing various treatises on Poverty and on the so-called Prophecies of Abbot Joachim, some of which were condemned to be burnt as heretical. Olivi died in 1298 at Narbonne.

Ubertino now entered on a stay of some years (with interludes of preaching in the neighbourhood) at the Convent on La Verna; here his Arbor Vitæ Crucifixæ Jesu was composed. With due reverence for the Franciscan Mount of Transfiguration, he writes: "I was brought unto that holy place of solitude that is called Mount La Verna, the which I until now

¹ Arbor, Prologue (col. 3). Cf. Bartholi, Tractatus de Indulgentia S. M. de Portiuncula, ed. Sabatier, p. lxiii.

² Purg. xiii. 127-9.

³ For Olivi's life, and Ubertino's references to him, see Ehrle, Archiv, Vol. III. pp. 409, sqq.

defile with my unworthy abiding therein". The hallowed associations and wild beauty of this lonely retreat-Dante's crudo sasso intra Tevere ed Arno, its little Convent perched on gaunt limestone crags, backed by solemn forests, looking down on the lovely Casentino on one hand and towards far-away San Marino on the other-may well have served as inspirations, but his direct inspiration came, as he was persuaded, from Christ Himself and the Holy Spirit. It was at the entreaty of his brother "after the flesh" and of the Guardian of the Convent that he consented to set down in book form some of his accustomed meditations and devotions, with dilations more or less relevant and methodical; the work was completed within a few months, on the Vigil of St. Michael, 1305. This strange, incoherent, fascinating book reveals the soul of a mystic passing through exaltations and glooms; a holy simplicity, and a devotion to the Person of our Lord that recall St. Francis himself, or à Kempis. At times the anguish of Ubertino's soul breaks through, in echoes of the strife raging without. In such passages he uses generally the language of the Apocalypse. An intimate knowledge of Holy Scripture is shown throughout.

The title of the book is, of course, derived from the ancient and familiar identification of the Cross of Christ with the Tree of Life, that repaired the fatal evil of Eden's Tree of Knowledge—"The Tree of Life which bare twelve manner of fruits . . . and the leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. xxii. 2). A recent example of this imagery had enjoyed great favour and popularity, the Lignum Vitæ de Mysterio Passionis¹ of St. Bonaventura. The Tree, with its "fruits," as described in this treatise, is often seen in thirteenth and fourteenth century Italian frescoes, with St. Bonaventura holding his manuscript and pen seated at its foot; a well-known example is in the refectory (now a museum) of Sta. Croce, Florence; another (dated 1347) is in Sta. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo.

Ubertino borrowed Bonaventura's idea, some of his verse

¹ Sti. Bonaventuræ Opera Omnia, Vol. VIII. (Quaracchi, 1882, etc.)

headings, and some passages verbally, but he added about one hundred original verse headings, and expanded the pious reflections of the original enormously, adding digressions into Franciscan history, personal experience, and contemporary affairs. The book becomes a dogmatic and ascetic treatise. His knowledge of the life of St. Francis, and first days of the Order, was derived from "that holy Brother" Conrad of Offida who, as Ubertino reminds his readers, had personally known Leo and others of the "Companions"; he refers to Leo's manuscripts (those *rotuli* not unknown in recent controversies on Franciscan literature) and lays special stress on "the intention of the Blessed Francis concerning the observance of the Rule" that was set forth in them.

It is difficult to follow the elaborate arrangement of either Bonaventura's or Ubertino's "Tree" without having a picture before one. That in the Quaracchi edition shows the trunk, bearing the Crucified Saviour, divided into three parts *Origo*, *Passio*, and *Glorificatio*. Branches spring on each side, bearing four leaves, each leaf inscribed with a *versiculus* relating to that part of our Lord's life, and each branch culminating in a "fruit". Ubertino makes these verses the headings for the chapters of the five books into which his *Arbor* is divided; as specimens, the following (from Book III.) may be given:—

Jesus præconem audiens.
Jesus vir baptizatus.
Jesus desertum incolens.
Jesus hoste tentatus.—Etc., etc.

A similar idea of "fruits" is found in the "Golden Book of Conformities" of Bartholomew of Pisa (1387), with the added suggestion of "conformity" between Christ and St. Francis that pervades that work. One may quote two versiculi by way of example:—

Jhesus dat legem populis
Franciscus regulator
and
Jhesus emissus cælitus
Franciscus destinatur.

¹ He admits borrowing (ex aliorum dictis) but does not mention Bonaventure by name.

Throughout the Arbor one finds a curious love of method, shown in minute subdivisions, combined with lack of method, shown in a rambling from subject to subject, following fanciful analogies from the Old Testament. Wadding well calls it "undigested, and not beaten into shape," and in places it is marred by extravagance and invective. But the searcher among these discursive pages finds pearls of a true and touching piety—from the dedication of this "little bundle of fair myrrh" to "all such as be faithful to Christ Jesus and lovers of Holy Poverty," onward—and is brought into intimate touch with the writer's vivid personality. One or two metrical compositions show real feeling, though a sometimes doggerel versification. The most striking is "The Lament of the Blessed Virgin concerning the Cross," in Book IV.

But the passage with most literary interest is that taken by Dante—an uncut jewel to be polished by his master-hand and set in his *Paradiso* ¹—the sublime image of Poverty sharing the Cross with Christ while His Mother stood below:—

. . . . dove Maria rimase in giuso Ella con Cristo salse in sulla croce.

This image, it is true, was partly derived from an earlier "Spiritual" work known to Ubertino and Dante, the beautiful Sacrum Commercium Beati Francisci cum Domina Paupertate, whose probable author was John of Parma. But the comparison of the Lady Poverty and the Blessed Virgin is In an eloquent passage (Bk. I. cap. 5), Ubertino's own. difficult of translation, he says: "When the Disciples fled, she (Poverty) did not withdraw; nay, when Thy Mother herself, she that hitherto had alone faithfully tended Thee, and with thoughtful love had shared in Thy sufferings, when even this Mother, I say, could not avail to reach Thee, the Lady Poverty, with all her penuries (omnibus suis penuriis), like the esquire (domicellus) most pleasing unto Thee, embraced Thee more closely than ever, and was more wholeheartedly joined unto Thee in Thine agony".

We have not yet referred to the many traces of Joachimist teaching in the *Arbor*, probably derived from Peter John Olivi, whose own Apocalyptic writings are in places incorporated verbally. They are another link with Dante, who sets in Paradise ¹:—

il calabrese abate Gioacchino di spirito profetico dotato.

Joachim² was one of the most powerful influences affecting Ubertino, and, indeed, the whole religious life of his time. It was only with considerable searchings of heart that his own orthodoxy had been officially certified as it is in the Liturgy, but that of his later exponents and interpreters, who were ceaselessly adding to and commenting upon his original nucleus of Prophecies, was still more questionable; it was undoubtedly, as we have said, the Joachimist leanings of Ubertino, Angelo da Clareno and their friends that gave colour to those accusations of heresy which they so deeply resented. Ubertino quotes (Arbor, v. 2) the belief, accepted by Bonaventura, that Joachim had foreseen the coming of St. Francis and had identified him with the "Angel of the Sixth Seal" (Rev. vii. 2). Although Ubertino evidently accepted Joachim's teaching as to the reign of the poor and kingdom of the Spirit, he was a loyal son of the Church, like Dante, however bitterly both might criticise her unworthy rulers. At the end of the Arbor, he proclaims: "From this time I entirely withdraw all that the Holy Roman Church shall show to be untrue". Unlike Dante, he seems to have considered Celestine an innocent and unwilling agent in the "great refusal," speaking as he does of that "dire innovation (horrenda novitas) of the rejection of Pope Celestine and usurpation of his successor". As Dante looked to the Veltro to remedy existing evils, so Ubertino and the "Spirituals," following Joachim, looked to the "angelic Pope," "the holy Pope to come". Another re semblance between Dante and Ubertino is in their devotion

¹ Par. xii. 140-1.

² For Joachim, see Renan, Nouvelles Études d'Histoire Religieuse, and Mr. Gardner's Essay in the present volume.

to the Blessed Virgin, so beautifully expressed alike in the *Arbor* and the *Paradiso*.

The Arbor was printed at Venice in 1485, in folio, with black-letter type, and vermilion capitals and occasional underlinings put in roughly by hand. The British Museum has two copies of this edition.¹

The Arbor is Ubertino's most important literary work. The others are of an apologetic or controversial nature, pamphlets dating from the period of the Council of Vienne. A treatise De Septem Statibus Ecclesiae, which has been ascribed to both Joachim and Ubertino, is nothing but an abstract of part of the Arbor,² though it has been separately printed.

On leaving the Convent on La Verna, Ubertino seems to have become private chaplain to the Cardinal Napoleone Orsini, who more than once acted as advocate of the "Spirituals" at the Papal Court. Hither Ubertino and others were summoned by a Bull of Clement V., in April, 1310, to give evidence in the Poverty question that was dividing the whole Church, and the Friars Minor in particular, into two camps. The main question as to the absolute poverty of Christ and His Apostles, theoretical as it seems, was hotly debated and made a matter of orthodoxy or heresy, politicians and princes taking up one side or the other. It had its bearing on the character of the Papacy—this ideal "Pope to come" was to be poor—and on a second question, of practical interest for all Friars Minor, the interpretation of their Rule as to Poverty. In this controversy Ubertino was henceforth immersed; his Arbor had sufficiently shown his passionate convictions, and he became the spokesman of the party who opposed any relaxation of their Rule, any departure from the oft-expressed will of their Founder.

Clement had made inquiries about those summoned, and in particular about Ubertino, "for that he was an Italian,"

¹ We may add to the MSS. of the *Arbor* mentioned by Fr. Callaey, op. cit., and by Fr. Bihl in *Arch. Franc. Hist.* iv. 598-9, another MS. formerly in the Phillipps collection, now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester.

² Vide Huck, U. von Casale, p. 73, note 2. Knoth, pp. 31-4.

says Angelo, "and had received a good testimony from the Minister-General, because, in sooth, they were men of weight in religion and in character, and eminent in learning, especially Brother Ubertino". This testimony to Ubertino's piety and learning is confirmed by Wadding, no ardent eulogist of the *Spirituals* in general. "Among the men of his age," he says, "none was held to be more learned or holy". Elsewhere he calls him "a pious and learned man, the keenest champion of Franciscan Poverty and the discipline of the Rule". He is in the forefront throughout the fray, by his own party looked on as *sectator*, *defensor*, *et fautor*, in his opponents' charges always mentioned with special emphasis.

Ubertino pleaded his cause before the Pope with eloquence and fervour, making an elaborate defence of the teaching of Peter John Olivi, for whom he published an Apologia.2 The Zelanti loudly demanded reforms, threatening a split, and charging the Conventuals with laxity, especially in the matter of receiving money; these retorted with the usual charges of heresy and self-will. There was a very hail of accusations, refutations, epistles, libelli, and every variety of fiery tract and pamphlet. During two years of the sitting of the Council of Vienne, there raged this "prolonged and scandalous wrangling," with the inevitable result, as Wadding mournfully confesses, of "many scandals, most pitiful to see in that holy and flourishing Order". The Pope sought to decide on the contested points of the Franciscan Rule by the issue, in 1312, of his famous Bull, Exivi de Paradiso.4 His pronouncement was distinctly on the side of the Strict Observance, pointing out that those who professed the Rule were bound to observe literally the usus arctos seu pauperes therein prescribed; the administration, however, was still left in the hands of the Superiors (prelati) in the Order. Ubertino, foreseeing the difficulties that these would put in the way of such observance in practice, and deeply wounded by their hostility

¹ B. P. Fr. Opuscula, I. p. 109., Annales, V. p. 417.

² Vide., Ehrle, Archiv, Vol. II. pp. 363, 377.

³ Glassberger (who writes with a bias against the "Spirituals").

⁴ For this and other Bulls mentioned, see Bullarium Franciscanum, Vol. V.

and suspicions, fell on his knees and passionately implored Clement to release him from his obedience to them, but his petition was not granted. Some chroniclers, such as Angelo and Bartholomew of Pisa, state that Ubertino became a Carthusian, but there is no direct evidence to confirm this, and it is probably a confusion with the permission that he received later on from John XXII. to become a Benedictine.

The years following the publication of Exivi were hard ones for the "Spirituals". They were subjected to petty oppressions and persecutions, to ill-treatment and imprisonment, and the natural bitterness thus engendered, together with their acute distress at being thwarted in the faithful observance of their Rule, find full expression in Angelo da Clareno's Chronicle of Tribulations. In a letter to various brethren, composed about 1313, he writes: "Pray for me, and pray God for Brother Ubertino and all the brethren that have fought, and are fighting, with him for the way of God. . . . Likewise for the Lords Cardinals, Jacomo and . . . Napoleone . . . for that with all their hearts they favour the way of God." (This expression, "way of God," seems to have been used in the party much as "the Way" is in the Acts of the Apostles.) In 1314 they complained that the Bull Exivi was not obeyed, and demanded that Superiors more favourable to themselves should be appointed. Clement's death took place in April of this year, and the Papal See was vacant for two years until the election of John XXII. in 1316, a new Minister-General, Michael of Cesena, being elected for the Friars Minor about the same time. latter endeavoured to reconcile the two parties, but in vain, whereupon he sought the new Pope's intervention. Ubertino and others were again summoned to the Curia, the same accusations and defence were made, but John was less friendly to the "Spirituals" than his predecessor, and treated them with great harshness, imprisoning some, delivering others to the tender mercies of the Conventuals,1 and handing over

¹ What the Spirituals might expect from their Conventual brethren may be gathered from Ubertino's answer when the Pope suggested that he should stay for a few days at a house of the Friars Minor till arrangements were made for

others to the Inquisition. Four were burnt as heretics at Marseilles in 1318 and many more suffered a similar fate in the following years.

But John's treatment of Ubertino was in such marked contrast to that accorded to others as to make one realize how impressive Ubertino's personality must have been. "He was held of no common account in the Curia," says Wadding. When his enemies did all that they could to stir up the Pope against him at this juncture, petitioning that he should be removed from the Curia, John offered him permission to enter another Order. This Ubertino unwillingly accepted, "putting on him the monkish habit as a most bitter cross," but his enemies' triumph was short-lived, as they saw him more honoured at the Curia in his Benedictine habit than before. They continued to pursue him "with the violence of wild beasts and the subtlety of serpents" (ferali impetu et dracociniis insidiis). Possibly the Pope thought his removal might make for peace, at any rate he gave him a permission, couched in gracious and complimentary language, to transfer himself to the Benedictine Monastery of St. Peter at Gembloux (Gemblach) near Liège. (Bartholomew of Pisa's statement 2 that he cut Ubertino off from the Order like a "rotten limb causing division and scandal" is thus disproved.) "Thou hast been at pains," so runs the Bull, "to set forth unto Us that, because of divers infirmities and bodily ailments whereby thou art often afflicted, and because of other reasonable causes laid before Us, thou art fain to be transferred from the Order of Brothers Minor, wherein at first thou wert professed, unto the Order of St. Benedict, for the greater peace of thine own person, and that thou mayest the better pay obedience unto the Most High. We therefore . . . do henceforth utterly absolve thee by Our Apostolic authority from all submission, jurisdiction, obligation, yoke, and obedience to the Rule of the

him: "After staying with the friars for a single day I shall not need any provision in this world from you or anyone else". Archiv, ii. p. 151.

¹ Angelo da Clareno, Tribulatio Septima. (Ehrle, Archiv, ii. p. 150.)

² Liber Conformitatum, p. ciiii. (I, 440, ed. Quaracchi.)

said Order of St. Francis and of all those in authority therein . . . decreeing that by the aforesaid transference unto the said Order of St. Benedict . . . no disgrace attaches unto thee, nor aught that should in anywise hinder thy promotion or thine honourable estate . . . inside the monastery aforesaid or outside the same."

Whether, in spite of this commendation, the Benedictines hesitated to receive such a firebrand, we do not know; but Ubertino seems to have lingered at the Curia for some time, and we cannot be sure that he ever went to Gembloux at all.

In 1321 the smouldering ashes of the interminable Poverty dispute were stirred into a sudden blaze by the pronouncement of a Dominican Inquisitor that it was heresy to maintain that Christ and His Apostles possessed nothing as individuals or as a body (in speciali aut communi); the Franciscans retorted by declaring this pronouncement to be heresy. In March, 1322, the Pope, through Cardinal Napoleone Orsini, sought a formal opinion, or declaration, on the subject from Ubertino, "whom he knew to be right well versed in the Holy Scriptures". He, in reply, produced in the following year an able statement,1 which, briefly, was to this effect. answer could not be a simple yes or no. Christ and the Apostles had to be considered in two lights: first, as leaders of the Church, in which capacity they had goods in common, for distribution to the poor, etc.; secondly, as individuals, examples of perfection. There were two ways in which individuals might possess: (1) Civiliter et mundane, having possessions protected by law, private ownership; (2) Jure naturali, having possessions in so far as they were realnecessities, or for charity. In this second sense, and in this: only, Christ and His Apostles, as individuals, could have been said to possess, and there was nothing to hinder Hisfollowers possessing in like manner. This declaration appears to have given satisfaction to Dominicans and Fran-

¹ Given in Wadding, Ann. vi. pp. 362-3, and Baluze, Miscell. ii. 279. Ubertino quoted in his support John xii. 6; Matt. xix. 27, and v. 40; Luke vi. 29; I Tim. vi. 8.

ciscans alike; it was pronounced "sane" and "Catholic," and seemed to promise a peaceful settlement.

But, if the Pope declared himself satisfied, his satisfaction can have been but hollow. For the whole course of his recent legislation had been directed against the strict interpretation of Franciscan Poverty, and he was now about to declare definitely against it and against this view of Apostolic Poverty. A Bull of 1317 had relaxed the severity of Clement's Exivi; the Gloriosam Ecclesiam of 1318 accused the "Spirituals" of schism and of sharing Waldensian errors; 1 now, in December of this year (1322), the Bull Ad Conditorem withdrew from the Minorites the privilege of receiving, holding, and recovering property in the name of the Roman Church. Henceforth if they enjoyed the use of their goods, lands and houses, they could not maintain that they had no property on the plea that the proprietory right was vested in the Holy See. The Order was thus at one blow deprived of its most valued title to superior sanctity.

A year later, a still more disturbing Bull (Cum inter non-nullos) finally pronounced it heresy to maintain—what Popes and holy men had maintained for the last fifty years—that Christ and His Apostles had no property individually or in common. While Ad conditorem declared that the Franciscans were false to their ideal, the inference to be drawn from Cum inter nonnullos was that their ideal was not worth striving for. It was now the turn of the Community of the Order to rebel against ecclesiastical authority.²

Murmurs were heard on all sides, some did not hesitate to declare the Pope himself a heretic, and the disaffection came to a head at the Court of Louis of Bavaria, King of the Romans, who was already at strife with John, and who was later on to pronounce him no true Pope and to elect another in his stead. Ubertino, like Michael of Cesena,

¹ It must be admitted that the more extravagant ones had gone some way towards justifying these charges.

² This clear explanation of a difficult situation has been kindly supplied to me by Mr. A. G. Little, to whom I am much indebted in other respects.

³ See Mussato's "Ludovicus Bavarus," in Boehmer, Fontes Rerum Germanicarum, Vol. I. pp. 170 sqq.

Marsilio of Padua, William of Occam and others, took refuge with Louis,¹ escaping secretly from Avignon where a fresh heresy-hunt had been instituted against him, probably because of his generous and unswerving championship of Olivi, whose followers in Provence were in especial disfavour. A Bull of 16th September, 1325, bids the Guardians of the Friars Minor arrest Ubertino da Casale, formerly of their Order, because he has left the Curia secretly and without permission and was wandering about as a vagabond. (It will be observed that he is not spoken of as a Benedictine, which seems to show that he never really associated himself with that Order.)

Wadding's account of Ubertino stops abruptly with this Bull; Glassberger's 2 statement that in 1330 he wrote a Treatise on the Poverty of Christ in response to a request from the Pope is, considering their relations at that time, a sheer impossibility and must be a confusion with 1322, while equally impossible is the statement which he quotes from a Friar Minor that Ubertino lived at Montpellier until Urban VI. became Pope in 1378. He would thus have been nearly one hundred and twenty years old!

A "Process" and a "Sentence" of Louis of Bavaria directed against John XXII.3 in 1328, the latter especially, bear a close resemblance to other writings of Ubertino, and express his convictions; he may very likely have had a hand in them. But the fact that we hear no more of him makes it probable that he died not long after this; M. Sabatier suggests not later than 1338.

It is perhaps difficult to arouse much sympathy or enthusiasm for a persistent controversialist or embittered "extremist". The controversies in which Ubertino was "ever a fighter" may seem to-day fruitless and trivial, and he has perforce been shown rather in this aspect than in the more attractive one of author of the *Arbor Vitæ*. But a study of

¹ See Mussato's "Ludovicus Bavarus," in Boehmer, Fontes Rerum Germanicarum, Vol. I. p. 175. And Raynaldus, Annales Ecclesiastici, Vol. XV. p. 304.

² Anal. Franciscana, Vol. II. pp. 151-2.

³ Baluze, Vitæ Paparum Avenioniensium, Vol. II. pp. 512, 522.

St. Francis and his ideal of Holy Poverty makes one realize how closely Ubertino was following him, and how pathetic was his unequal contest for the observance of his Rule sine glosa. If he was tempted in his last years to despair of the cause, as may well have been, we know it was to triumph ere the century closed. In the honourable recognition of the Frati dell' Osservanza, in the holy lifework of that well-loved Saint of his Order, Bernardino of Siena, were realized the dreams, and vindicated the struggles, of Ubertino.

E. GURNEY SALTER.

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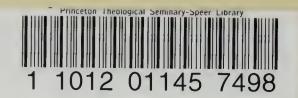
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